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BRITISH TRADE UNIONISM

SIX STUDIES BY P E P

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PREFACE

The six studies in this volume are the outcome of an enquiry begun towards the end of the war. Work on the project was suspended for a variety of reasons in 1946; one of the most compelling reasons being a conviction that the position and influence of the trade unions in the political and economic life of the country were undergoing a profound change. When work was resumed again in 1947, it was at once apparent that much of the material which had been collected was already out of date. A great deal of new research would have been necessary, involving a further postponement of publication, in order to carry out the original intention of publishing a comprehensive report on the British trade union movement.

The subject of trade unionism at the present stage of development of British society is indeed so vast that no single report could attempt to cover the whole without omissions and simplifications. The existence of a state of full employment, the advent of a Labour Government and the experiment of government planning in what is commonly called a "mixed" economy, to mention only three factors, have so increased the strength and responsibilities of the trade unions that there are few sides of the national life on which they do not exert an important influence. Even an exhaustive study of the part played by trade unions in industrial relations would have covered only one of the fields in which their attitudes and activities are a force to be reckoned with.

The further difficulty had to be faced that the material on which a full report would need to draw is patchy, and on some vital questions scarcely exists at all. A mass of data is available in published form on the organisation of the trade unions, on their rules and membership, on the machinery of collective bargaining and many other relevant matters. This has been supplemented by personal investigation and first-hand illustrative material. But data are scarce on almost all questions relating to the rank and file; what they do and why they do it. Why do people join a union? Why do they fall out? What does their membership involve in practice? What is the motivation of the rank and file members in respect of wages and conditions of work? Under what conditions do they resort to the strike weapon? These and similar questions are discussed in the pages which follow, but to have answered them fully would have required research of a different type. The techniques of interviewing and random sampling would have had to be employed on a large scale and with a degree of objective analysis which has hardly yet been attained. There is undoubtedly a great need for extended research of this kind in Great Britain; the problems involved, connected for the most part with group psychology and group relations, are only beginning to be studied systematically.

For these reasons it was decided to select a number of the main questions affecting the British trade union movement in the post-war period and to discuss them in a series of separate studies. The factual material collected in the course of the enquiry, after being checked and brought up to date, has served as the basis on which to build the discussion. The studies so presented are concerned largely with questions of organisation and structure; these are examined against the background of the general economic situation of the country. Three levels of trade union activity are distinguished throughout: (a) head office and the permanent officials, (b) branch officials and the active branch membership,

and (c) the comparatively inactive rank and file. Much importance is attached to this three-level analysis, which has its equivalents in many other fields of economic and political behaviour. The main purpose of the enquiry has been, indeed, to provide an anatomy of the trade union movement; to try to throw new light on its policies, attitudes and activities by an examination of its structure and the relations between its parts.

Summary of the studies

After describing the various main types of union and their principal constitutional features, *the first study* proceeds to the analysis of union membership at its three levels; the analysis is supported by evidence collected from a number of individual unions. *The second study* describes the machinery of negotiation; an account is given of the methods of collective bargaining and of the machinery, statutory and otherwise, for fixing wages, hours and conditions of work. *The third study* examines the subjects of negotiation. The main section is concerned with wages; it includes a short account of some methods of wage-payment, a discussion of recent proposals for a unified wages policy and of the relationship of wages to the other components of the national income. *The fourth study*, entitled "The General Staff of Labour", deals with the top level of the movement, the Trades Union Congress and its General Council. The internal structure of the T.U.C. is described in its historical setting, as well as the external relations of the T.U.C. with the Government, the Labour Party, the employers' organisations and the international trade union movement. *The fifth study*, "Relations on the Job", is concerned with trade unionism at the level of the workshop. A full account is given of the functions and position of shop stewards and of the development of joint consultative machinery. The last section of this study discusses the attitudes of the two sides within industry towards each other and the prospect of solving some of the psychological problems involved.

Finally, in *the sixth study*, an attempt is made to pull together the threads of discussion in the earlier studies, and to relate the present position of trade unionism to the conditions of post-war Britain. The attitude of the trade union movement is considered in relation to Government economic policy, to the problems of manpower distribution in conditions of full employment, to the nationalised industries and to privately-owned industry. The study ends by posing the key question: how to create within the movement the confidence in Britain's economic future, and in the permanence of full employment, which is a necessary condition of full participation by the movement in the economic purposes of the nation.

* * * *

Appendix III, facing page 184, gives an alphabetical list of the initials or short titles by which the trade unions referred to in the text are commonly known. For ease of reference this page may be folded out while reading the book.

TRADE UNION STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

It is logical to begin a series of studies in Trade Unionism with an anatomy of the organisations which are its subject matter. Without some analysis of the nature and quality of the trade unions themselves, discussion of major issues of policy must suffer from a certain vagueness and unreality. How many men and women are in the trade union movement? What are the various types of union in which they are organised? Where do the leaders come from? Is the structure of the unions democratic, in a way that encourages the lively interest in its affairs of the rank and file member? Or do the making and control of policy rest in the hands of the officials and a few active individuals?

These questions, simple as they may seem, lead very deep into the heart of trade unionism and raise problems, not only of organisation, but of human psychology and the workings of the social process which have parallels outside the union movement. The national organisation which has a national executive, a series of district or local branches, and a large rank and file membership, is a very common type in this country—the main political parties are obvious examples. On almost all of them the problem of liaison between the rank and file, the branch and the national executive causes difficulty, more particularly when national policy is supposed to represent the wishes of the rank and file, and when leaders and officials are elected by the membership. Nowhere is this problem more vital than in trade union organisation. It is far from academic. Since the end of the war there have been a number of important “unofficial” strikes—the dock strike, the gas strike, the road haulage strike, and the strike of surface workers following the introduction of the five-day week in the coal mines. These strikes represent a disagreement between different levels in the unions concerned—the rank and file, sometimes including the shop stewards, on one side and the branch secretaries and national leaders on the other.

In the pages that follow it is important for the reader to keep in mind the underlying hopes and fears and hostilities. There is a clearly marked gradation of attitude running through the union structure—the rank and file, suspicious of employers and of those who put their point of view, deceptively quiescent for long periods, ill-versed in the difficulties of negotiation; the more experienced and consistently active group in the branch, conscious of difficulties, anxious not to imperil the claim of the branch to meet employers as a responsible body, yet militant and conscious of pressure from below, often critical of what seems to be “inertia” at the national level; finally, the national officials, concerned with main issues of policy, weighing the balance of forces and expediency, trying to form and execute a broad strategy for the union advance, embarrassed by manifestations of “irresponsibility” by the branches or the rank and file which may prejudice much greater issues. To members at each point of this ladder of education and responsibility each issue, and, indeed, the definition of the purpose of unionism, may look very different. Union structure must somehow leave enough room both for leadership and for democratic control if the movement is to remain coherent in policy and united in method.

This first study begins with an account, mainly statistical, of the number, size and type of the individual unions which together comprise the trade union movement. It proceeds to examine the hierarchy of officials and committees which is typical of many unions, and ends with an analysis of the membership at three levels.

The description of the three levels, based as it is on incomplete statistical data, cannot be regarded as equally applicable at all points and in all details. At best it presents a picture of the movement which is broadly correct. But it has one element of particular value. An attempt has been made to get at least some quantitative basis for checking impressions and general deductions. The analysis of attendance and voting in T.U. branches, and the attempt to correlate both with the size of the branch, though carried out on a small scale, is a step towards bringing a controversial subject within the ambit of scientific analysis. This attempt might well be made for other democratic institutions, and a comparison of results would be of high interest. It is noteworthy that the division between "the 20 per cent" of regular active attention to union business and "the 80 per cent" of apparent apathy but episodic action can be carried back for nearly a hundred years in the union structure. It may well be that such a division is typical, not of the unions only, but of the organisational form. At least there are few grounds for thinking that these proportions represent a lack of vigour in the unions; their sustained level of activity is probably high in comparison with other institutions of the same type.

I. NUMBER, SIZE AND TYPE OF UNIONS

The following figures of trade unions and their membership are taken from the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* for November 1946 and November 1947:

TABLE I
NUMBERS OF UNIONS AND AGGREGATE MEMBERSHIP, 1931-1946

Year	Number of Unions at End of Year	Membership at End of Year (Thousands)			Percentage Increase or Decrease on Membership of Previous Year
		Male	Female	Total	
1931	1,108	3,859	765	4,624	— 4.5
1932	1,081	3,698	746	4,444	— 3.9
1933	1,081	3,661	731	4,392	— 1.2
1934	1,063	3,854	736	4,590	+ 4.5
1935	1,049	4,106	761	4,867	+ 6.0
1936	1,036	4,495	800	5,295	+ 8.8
1937	1,032	4,947	895	5,842	+10.3
1938	1,024	5,127	926	6,053	+ 3.6
1939	1,017	5,265	980	6,245	+ 3.2
1940	1,002	5,470	1,089	6,559	+ 5.0
1941	994	5,730	1,380	7,110	+ 8.4
1942	989	6,129	1,683	7,812	+ 9.9
1943	985	6,236	1,882	8,118	+ 3.9
1944	961	6,217	1,812	8,029	— 1.1
1945	777	6,214	1,599	7,813	— 2.7
1946	753	7,139	1,575	8,714	+11.5

The not inconsiderable reduction of 184 in the number of separate unions during 1945 was due partly to the amalgamation of the majority of the coalmining unions into the National Union of Mineworkers, and partly to the decisions of a group of loosely associated Civil Service unions to function as one unit. The total of 8,714,000 at the end of 1946 is the highest on record, and compares with the previous peak of 8,348,000 recorded in 1920. The distribution of total membership at the end of 1946 by industrial groups is shown in Table II.

It will be seen from Table II that "other transport and general labour", a group which includes the Transport and General Workers Union and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, is the largest single group; the next biggest is "metals, machines, conveyances" and the next "coalmining". These three groups account for over half of the total membership. A more detailed breakdown by size is given in Table III. This table shows that 17 unions, each with a membership of over 100,000, accounted for two-thirds of total membership. Another 31 unions, each with a membership of 25,000 or more, accounted for one-sixth of the total, leaving 705 unions, or 94 per cent of the whole, with the remaining 18 per cent of membership. When the smaller unions are

TABLE II
INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP OF BRITISH TRADE UNIONS, 1946

Groups of Unions	Membership at End of 1946		
	Males	Females	Total
Agriculture, horticulture, etc.	143,960	8,930	152,890
Coalmining	708,790	13,630	722,420
Pottery and glass	14,170	17,000	31,170
Metals, machines, conveyances, etc.	1,507,180	73,720	1,580,900
Cotton (preparing, spinning and manufacturing)	66,120	151,390	217,510
Other textiles	81,510	79,490	161,000
Boots and shoes	67,350	31,820	99,170
Tailoring and other clothing	36,540	108,050	144,590
Paper, printing, etc.	183,070	51,750	234,820
Building, woodworking and furniture manu- facture, public works contracting, etc.	542,330	11,750	554,080
Railway service	560,320	56,410	616,730
Water transport	88,110	470	88,580
Other transport (road, dock, etc.) and general labour	1,834,660	294,250	2,128,910
Commerce and distribution	247,500	139,290	386,790
Banking and insurance	77,370	16,150	93,520
Central Government	425,840	179,750	605,590
Local Government	236,540	91,530	328,070
Teaching	97,890	171,770	269,660
Entertainment and sport	54,470	19,740	74,210
All other groups	165,590	57,690	223,280
TOTAL	7,139,310	1,574,580	8,713,890

TABLE III
SIZE OF UNIONS, 1946

Number of Members	No. of Unions	Total Membership	Percentages of	
			Total No. of all Unions	Total Member- ship of all Unions
Under 100	162	8,000	21.5	0.1
100 to 500	210	52,000	27.9	0.6
500 to 1,000	88	63,000	11.7	0.7
1,000 to 2,500	96	153,000	12.7	1.8
2,500 to 5,000	70	244,000	9.3	2.8
5,000 to 10,000	42	287,000	5.6	3.3
10,000 to 15,000	18	217,000	2.4	2.5
15,000 to 25,000	19	339,000	2.5	3.9
25,000 to 50,000	20	693,000	2.6	7.9
50,000 to 100,000	11	831,000	1.5	9.5
100,000 or more	17	5,827,000	2.3	66.9
TOTAL	753	8,714,000	100.0	100.0

considered alone, it will be seen that 460 unions, each with less than 1,000 members, represented 61 per cent of the total number of unions, and less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of total membership. The simplified breakdown runs as follows:

TABLE IV

Size	No. of Unions	Per Cent of Total Membership
0 to 1,000	460	1.4
1,000 to 25,000	245	14.3
25,000 to 100,000	31	17.4
100,000 and over	17	66.9
TOTAL	753	100.0

It is important to note that not all the unions to which the foregoing figures refer are affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. Figures presented to the 1947 Congress showed that there were 187 affiliated unions with a total membership of 7,540,397. While there may be differences in the basis of compilation between the T.U.C. and the Ministry of Labour figures, it is not unreasonable to conclude that although affiliated unions only accounted for some 25 per cent of the total number of unions, their membership represented approximately 77 per cent of the total number of trade unionists. The only unaffiliated unions with memberships of more than 100,000 are the National Association of Local Government Officers and the National Union of Teachers.

Union constitutions

While the very small unions are not of great importance in the general policies of the movement, the medium-sized unions, including a number of important craft unions, pull perhaps more weight than would appear from their percentage membership.

Size is only one factor which determines the union constitution. Apart from size, the main factors leading to differences in constitutional rule are: (a) industry or industries represented; (b) type of organisation—whether craft, industrial, occupational or general. Other factors are the historical development of the union in question, for instance whether it has resulted from the amalgamation of a number of previously existing unions.

Craft unions, composed of workers performing the same or a very similar industrial operation, are the oldest type; in their pure form they are exclusive, craft-conscious bodies of skilled men, with a system of apprenticeship, elaborate demarcation of their craft from that of others, and often high contributions and benefits. Such unions have often been criticised for their tendency to conservatism, their lack of solidarity with other sections of workers and the fact that they sometimes stand in the way of comprehensive schemes of union amalgamation. But while it is unlikely that new unions will develop on craft lines, the existing craft unions have a valuable contribution to make to the diverse structure of trade unionism, not least because of their interest in preserving technical standards.

Industrial unions cater for all workers, skilled and unskilled, within a given industry. On theoretical grounds, they are probably the most logical form of trade unionism. Where it is difficult or impossible to build one union for an industry, federations of unions

catering for the industry are a good working alternative. Since skilled workers tend to be more highly unionised than the less skilled, they also tend to dominate an industrial union or federation. In some cases this may react adversely on the interests of the less skilled, but it will appear to a decreasing extent as the proportion of skilled to less skilled declines, through better organisation and a more integrated trade union policy.

Occupational unions—as the name implies—organise workers within a well-defined occupation in a given industry. Membership of such unions is conditional upon the worker remaining in a particular employment, as in the case of the Railway Clerks' Association, or in the employ of a particular employer, as in the case of the Prudential Staff Association.

The two great general unions* exemplify the type of unionism which caters for workers in many industries; beginning with unskilled labourers they have come to include many of the new semi-skilled grades, up to a high degree of skill. They tend to cut across the structure of industrial unions, participating in a number of federations and *ad hoc* associations with other unions. Small unions get swallowed up in them, and while they have grown at a remarkable pace, they are as yet nowhere near the limits of expansion. As against this growth, there is some tendency for the unions in specific industries (for example, agriculture, tobacco, chemicals) to build up an industrial unionism which competes with the general unions, to some extent successfully. The Transport and General Workers' Union, being organised on a trade basis, is in many ways like a federation of industrial unions.

The largest unions are predominantly either general or industrial, but among the top twenty there are six craft unions, namely, the Amalgamated Engineering Union (A.E.U.), the Electrical Trades Union (E.T.U.), the United Boilermakers' and Iron and Steel Shipbuilding Society (U.B.I.S.S.S.), the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers (A.U.B.T.W.), and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (A.S.L.E.F.). The medium-sized unions (5,000 to 50,000) are predominantly craft unions and include, for example, the National Union of Sheetmetal Workers and Braziers (88,391), the Typographical Association (42,758), and the United Patternmakers' Association (14,960). There are also a number of non-manual unions in the middle-size range and these include the Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen (41,722), the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union (32,084), the National Union of Bank Employees (25,342), and the National Union of Journalists (9,582). Such unions have their own distinctive character, as also do the growing technicians' organisations such as the Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives and Technicians (11,228), and—among the smaller unions—the Association of Building Technicians (3,585).†

* The Transport and General Workers' Union and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers.

† Membership figures for 1947.

II. THE UNION HIERARCHY

The Executive Committee

The National Executive Committee is probably the most important body in any trade union, although its composition and the responsibilities entrusted to it may vary considerably. Where it is a full time body, as in the A.E.U., the U.B.I.S.S.S., the Shipconstructors' and Shipwrights' Association (S.S.A.), the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers (A.U.F.W.), and the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (A.S.W.), it plays a continuous and important part in the government of the union; where it is part time, it will still be important, although tending to be larger and subject to more frequent changes of membership. The number of members varies with the size of the organisation, and the average membership of the full-time executive committees mentioned above is 5, while the average of a group of part-time executive committees is 22.

The executive committee is usually composed entirely of "lay" members (as against officers), and in this regard trade union rules have a strong bias towards keeping control in the hands of "the men at the bench". It is the rule of executive committees to be elected at fairly frequent intervals, usually every one to three years. In the railway unions, for example, election is for three years and, although re-election is permitted once, it cannot be repeated until three years have elapsed. In other cases, such as the London Society of Compositors (L.S.C.), the rules demand a lapse of two years, but, taking the trade union movement as a whole, re-election is permitted and frequent.

Delegate assembly

Every union has either a Delegate Assembly or a General Council. These bodies (the actual names used to describe them vary) function as a democratic check by the rank and file membership on the actions and policies of the full-time officials and the executive committee. The Delegate Assemblies usually meet annually, although biennial meetings are the rule in some important unions.* Quarterly delegate assembly meetings are held by some cotton textile groupings, but there are cases where meetings are only called on a decision of the executive committee or on a vote of the membership, as in the Associated Blacksmiths', Forge and Smithy Workers' Society (A.B.F.S.W.), U.B.I.S.S.S., S.S.A., A.U.F.W., and the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (I. & S.T.C.). Some general councils have only a few members (for example, 9 in the A.S.W.), but, in the main, both they and the delegate assemblies are on a large scale. Thus, the A.S.L.E.F. has 60 delegates, the National Union of Railwaymen (N.U.R.) 80, while others base their representation on the number of members; one per 1,000 in the T. & G.W.U., one per 200 in the Railway Clerks' Association (R.C.A.), one per 50 in the A.S.S.E.T., and one per 12 in the L.S.C. The last named has also an annual meeting of 52 delegates, elected by the divisional committee of the union. The procedure at the different meetings is usually in the form of a discussion of a report made by the National Executive Committee, combined with debates on resolutions originating,

* T. & G.W.U.; E.T.U.; N.U.P.B.W.; N.U.G.M.W.; N.U.B.S.O.; N.U.A.W.; N.U.P.E.

for the most part, from the branches. In addition, it may be a function of the meetings to elect certain officials, to act as a Court of Appeal on matters of internal discipline or to decide on revisions of union rules.

The General Secretary

At the apex of the hierarchy of officials is the General Secretary, the most important of the whole-time officers, but at the same time subject to democratic control by the membership through the National Executive Committee, whose business he transacts and whose policies he executes. In practice his powers are very great, provided that he is responsive to the opinions of the membership. In most unions he is elected by vote of all the members, but in some by vote of a conference of delegates (for example, R.C.A., A.E.S.D., A.A.C.B.R.R.O.). In the I. & S.T.C. he is appointed by the Executive Council. In the A.S.W. six candidates are selected by tests, and these are then voted on by all members; there is a similar arrangement in the N.U.B.S.O. In the National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers (N.U.D.B.T.W.), candidates are examined by the Executive Council and the appointment is made by the General Council, which consists of rank and file delegates. Voting, both in the first instance and when re-election takes place, serves as a democratic check on the activities of the key officers of the union. The N.U.P.E. advertises the post and appoints the most suitable candidate, and there is a similar practice in some of the Civil Service unions. The General Secretary's term of office is usually two or three years, and sometimes five years, but as a rule he is re-elected for another term and continues in office until death or retirement. In some unions, such as the I. & S.T.C., T. & G.W.U., the craft printers' unions, the N.U.D.B.T.W., the N.U.T.G.W., and the N.U.B.S.O., he holds office for life or "at the union's pleasure". Many unions have an age limit of 60 or 65 for the post of General Secretary, others stipulate that he should be not more than 45 or 50 at the time of his first election. His salary in the larger unions may rise to £1,000 a year or even higher. In addition, he commonly lives rent and fuel free at union headquarters, and his expenses are paid. In some of the building unions, his salary is linked to the craftsman's rate (P.G.D.E.U.), or tied to the cost of living index (A.U.B.T.W.). He is present at all important meetings of the union, frequently takes part in negotiations with employers and almost invariably is one of the union delegates to the Trades Union Congress.

The President

Besides the General Secretary and his Assistant, the union has a President. His status and powers vary considerably. As a rule, the office is part-time and a new President is elected at intervals of 1 to 3 years: his job in such cases is primarily one of chairmanship of the National Executive Committee and the Delegate Assembly. But in a number of important unions he is comparable with the General Secretary, the office being full-time and election being either for life or in practice amounting to the same thing through repeated re-election. In the Electrical Trades Union, for example, there is a division of responsibility whereby the Secretary is primarily responsible for administrative tasks and the President acts as the chief negotiating officer. Other unions with full-time Presidents include the National Union of Mineworkers, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, and the Typographical Association.

Organisers

Most unions have a number of full-time organisers whose job it is to conduct negotiations and to maintain union organisation in a given area or district, or sometimes in a given section of industry. The number of organisers varies with the size of the union. Thus the T. & G.W.U. has between 400 and 500, the A.E.U. has 46, the U.B.I.S.S.S. has 17, and the L.S.C. has 1. They may be elected by all the membership* or, in the case of divisional or district organisers, by all the members in the localities served by them.† Alternatively, they may be appointed by the Executive Committee.‡ Where election is the rule, ballots are held at intervals of 1 to 5 years, and serving officers are usually eligible for re-election. Very often, the post of organiser can be a stepping-stone to higher positions in the union and an active organiser can make himself well known among the rank and file.

There may be distinctions between different types of organisers, as in the A.E.U., which has National Organisers, Regional Officers, Divisional Organisers, and District Secretaries. The federal structure of the T. & G.W.U. is emphasised by the fact that its organisational staff includes National Trade Group Secretaries, Area Trade Group Secretaries and District Organisers. In addition, both the general unions and some of the textile and clothing unions have special women officers with a particular responsibility for the organisation of women workers. Again, some unions make a full-time job of the office of Secretary to a large branch and these include the A.S.W., the N.U.S., the N.U.B.S.O. and the T. & G.W.U.

Other officers

There may be provision for other full-time officers such as Financial Secretary and Head of the Legal Department in the T. & G.W.U., and the Financial Secretary in the T.A. Most unions of any size employ considerable administrative and clerical staffs, not necessarily drawn from the union membership. It is possible for a man who has made his mark on the clerical side of the work to secure promotion to high union positions, though he will usually do so through the intermediate stage of becoming an organiser and thereby becoming acquainted with union activity at the shop or factory level.

In recent years a number of unions have followed the lead of the T.U.C. by appointing research officers and staffs. Among the unions which have research departments are the T. & G.W.U., the Union of Post Office Workers (U.P.W.), the A.E.U., the N.U.M., the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (NATSOPA), and the N.U.B.E. Some of the existing departments are quite small and a number would be more correctly described, in relation to the work which they do, as information departments. Very often the duties of the research officers embrace additional responsibilities in the sphere of publicity and education. The question of the attitude to research in the trade union movement generally is touched on elsewhere in this volume.§

Democratic control

The character of democracy in a union largely depends on the mechanisms available to the rank and file for bringing influence to bear on the full-time officials. There is obviously a big difference between (1) the I. & S.T.C., whose General Secretary is

* The railway unions; the building unions except the A.S.W.; E.T.U., N.U.B.S.O.

† U.B.I.S.S.S., S.S.A., A.U.F.W.

‡ T. & G.W.U., I.S.T.C., A.S.W., NATSOPA, N.U.P.B.W., N.U.D.B.T.W., N.U.T.G.W., U.S.D.A.W., N.U.A.W., N.U.P.E.

§ See pp. 172-174.

appointed by the Executive Committee for life, whose Executive Committee is part-time, whose other full-time officials are appointed by the Executive Committee and whose Delegate Assembly is held at the discretion of the Executive Committee, and (2) the A.E.U., whose General Secretary is elected every three years by ballot of all the members, whose Executive Council is full-time, whose full-time officials are all elected by all the members and whose National Committee meets annually to consider all aspects of union policy, and which, in addition, has a special Appeals Committee (elected by the rank and file) empowered to reverse decisions of the Executive Committee. In practice as well as theory the difference in democracy between the two unions is marked, but it is a difference of degree rather than kind. Between these two extremes there is every sort of variation. Some unions would claim that electing officials is the more democratic method; others that by having them appointed by the Executive Committee they get more efficient results. In practice the difference between election and appointment may be less than would appear, since a particular system of nominating candidates for election may amount to nearly the same thing as appointment from the centre. It is a notable fact that officials once elected are nearly always re-elected, even when official policies have been criticised by sections of the rank and file. The type of man who gets to the top of a union, and his relationship to the rank and file, are greatly conditioned by the degree of vitality in union life in the branches and on the job. The types of union official are further discussed below.

District Councils

Intermediate between the national level and the branches, in the larger unions, there is usually a system of district, area, divisional, regional, etc., committees and councils. It would be too complicated to explore all the possible variations in this respect, but in many cases these intermediate bodies have great influence in practice, taking part in district or regional negotiations with local employers' federations, and providing a training ground for those who are later to become national officials. In the building industry, the N.F.B.T.O. has its own regional organisation as well as that of the constituent federated building unions. In cotton textiles, though there are large associations covering the main section of the industry (A.A.C.B.R.R.O., A.A.O.C.S.T., and A.W.A.) the local constituent unions continue to govern themselves internally, each according to its own set of rules. There is a tendency for Scotland to have separate unions of its own, and there are cases where two or more ostensibly national unions in fact cater for an industry in different localities, for example the Amalgamated Society of Leather Workers, with its headquarters in Leeds and the National Union of Leather Workers, based in Manchester. The general unions have their own specialised organisation, dealt with more fully below; in the T. & G.W.U. this consists of area committees, area trade group committees, and national trade group committees.

The T.U. branch

This brings us to the basic unit of trade union organisation, the local branch or lodge. Every trade unionist belongs to a branch, in most cases that which it is most convenient for him to attend. The basis of the branch is the locality, not the place of work, though it may happen that all or a majority of the members of a given branch have the same place of work. There is often an upper or lower limit (or both) to the size of branches; thus an A.E.U. branch should not, except by special permission, exceed 300 members, and a

T. & G.W.U. branch must contain at least 50. There is always a branch secretary, and a varying number of other officers, from 2 to 20 or more. In many cases small sums are paid to these, either for attendances at meetings or for undertaking other duties, and usually varying with the size of the branch. But the work of branch officials, which may be arduous, is in essence voluntary. So vital is the branch in the trade union structure that it is dealt with in detail below. It is at branch meetings that candidates for union posts are generally voted on, and resolutions passed on union policy, including wages policy, for transmission to head office.

Organisation "on the job"

In many industries, rank and file members are organised not only in branches but on the job, whether it is a building site, an engineering shop or a coal pit. At its most highly developed this form of organisation tends to overshadow the branch, and in the printing unions the system of chapels, based on the place of work, actually takes the place of branch organisation. However, organisation on the job is often rudimentary or non-existent. There may be provision for it in union rules without much being done about it in practice, or the situation may be exactly the other way about. The outstanding examples of it are to be found in engineering, where the shop stewards, first prominent in the first world war and even more so in the second, tend to dominate union activity. Unions which provide in their rules for stewards or their equivalent are A.B.F.S.W., the U.B.I.S.S.S., S.S.A. (Yard Collectors), N.S.M.M., E.T.U., A.U.F.W., A.E.U. (all the preceding are in engineering and shipbuilding), I. & S.T.C.; the craft building unions (card and ticket stewards); N.U.D.B.T.W., N.U.T.G.W., N.U.B.S.O. In mining, the checkweighman has a comparable role. In spinning mills there is usually an official responsible for matters affecting the mill. Both the general unions have stewards in certain industries. A steward, or his equivalent, may be little more than a collector of union dues; or he may have a highly responsible position, negotiating wage rates and conditions, dealing with queries and grievances inside the shop, and even in the home lives of the workers. He is usually elected by those he represents, though sometimes nominated or ratified by his branch or district committee.

A further stage in organisation is the stewards' committee, linking all the stewards in a given establishment; and all kinds of works committees, joint production committees and so forth, jointly representing workers and management. These developments are still in process of evolution, and show a high degree of variability and complexity. In their beginnings they have had to contend, like most growing institutions, with a good deal of opposition. This has come partly from employers, who have regarded them as subversive of discipline, but partly also from the officials of the unions, who have felt their own authority to be undermined. In the course of time opposition from both these quarters has been modified, and so has the character of shop stewards and their organisation. Not only have the latter come to co-operate more wholeheartedly with the union leaders, instead of tending to break away as a kind of "minority movement", but also partly owing to the war and post-war needs they have in many instances come to co-operate with managements and stand foursquare with them in the effort to increase production. Probably a new stage in their evolution has been reached. Employers and managements may find that, if full employment policies succeed, collaboration on the lines of the joint production committee or works committee will continue to be indispensable. Trade union leaders may consider that the advantages of active trade unionism

at the job level outweigh the difficulties of co-ordinating this ground-floor activity with the politics at the top.

Special cases—the general unions

Between them, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers had a total membership in 1947 of 2,025,476. This membership includes workers, both men and women, drawn from a wide range of industries. At the same time, the sections of industry from which their members are drawn are as a rule lower paid and less unionised than the sections represented in the other major unions. The original function of the general unions was to organise the labourers and unskilled workers; but with the development of new skills and numerous semi-skilled grades, the distinction between these unions and others on the basis of skill is of decreasing importance.

The distinctive structure and character of the general unions is due to their great size, to the number of industries they cater for, to their expansion by a process of amalgamation (the T. & G.W.U. has brought together 52 separate organisations) and to the wide scatter of their membership through units large and small.

Transport and General

In the T. & G.W.U. the General Secretary is elected by a ballot vote of all the members and retains his office "during the pleasure of the union". All the other permanent officials are appointed. These include the Assistant General Secretary and the Financial Secretary; twelve National Trade Group Secretaries, each responsible for a group of trades;* three secretaries of Trade Sections and a Woman Officer; thirteen area secretaries, each responsible for a large area, e.g. London and Home Counties, Midlands, South Wales, Scotland; and five secretaries of departments at head office.† In addition there are Area Trade Group Secretaries, District Secretaries, Organisers, and, in the case of certain branches, permanent branch secretaries. The number of permanent officials is therefore quite considerable. At the same time, as a safeguard against "bureaucracy", elaborate provision is made for the democratic control of the union by its "lay members", i.e. those who are not permanent officials. The supreme authority is the Biennial Conference, which alone has power to make constitutional changes. At the 1947 Conference there were 704 delegates, all of them "lay members". During the periods between conferences, administrative authority is vested in the General Executive Council, also a "lay" body, with fixed quarterly meetings. The Biennial Conference appoints an Appeals Committee, which has the last word on appeals against decisions of the General Executive Council.

The elected bodies, and their method of election, reflect the dual structure of the union, with its organisations (a) by trade groups, (b) by areas. Within each area there are Area Trade Group Committees, elected by the membership in the trade and area covered by each such committee, and providing the first organisational link between the branches and the centralised authority. The machinery is elastic, and can be varied

* Docks; waterways, including estuaries and canals; professional, technical, administrative, clerical and supervisory; road passenger transport; commercial road transport; power workers; engineering and metal trades; building trades; Government workers; municipal workers; agricultural workers; and general workers. There are also separate trade sections covering flour milling, fishing, and chemicals.

† Legal; research, political and educational; convalescent home; publications; and national health insurance.

by the addition of District Group Committees and supplementary Trade Sections. The Area Trade Group Committees elect (a) representatives on the Area Committees, which look after the affairs of the membership of an area, irrespective of trade; (b) representatives on the National Trade Group Committees, which look after the affairs of the membership of a trade group, irrespective of area.

The General Executive Council consisted in 1947 of representatives of each of the twelve trade groups, elected by the National Trade Group Committees; and also of twenty-two area representatives, who are elected by ballot vote of the whole of the membership in an area, one representative being allotted for an area with less than 50,000 members, two for an area with membership of between 50,000 and 150,000, and three for an area with more than 150,000 members.

To sum up the situation, the individual member of the T. & G.W.U. may take a direct part in the election of (a) the General Secretary (who is virtually permanent after election); (b) the area representatives on the General Executive Council, who hold office for the two-yearly term between Conferences. He can also take part in the election of the officers of his own branch, and of the representatives on his own Area Trade Group Committee (or District Committee where it exists). He does not directly take part in the election of members of Area Committees and National Trade Group Committees. Nor does he take a direct part in choosing the permanent officers of the union (other than the General Secretary), these being appointed by the General Executive Council.

The whole structure is a careful compromise between the need for efficiency in managing so vast an organisation and the need for keeping alive the democratic interest in the affairs of the union of the rank and file and particularly of the keen trade unionists from whom the leadership of the union must be drawn. Through its Research Department, the T. & G.W.U. provides a comprehensive information service for both officers and members on political, industrial and economic developments, while the education facilities available to members are both extensive and generous. Apart from free correspondence courses on the structure and practices of the union itself, and on a wide range of more general subjects, the T. & G.W.U. provides scholarships and grants to enable its members to attend summer schools and short courses at home and abroad. In addition, a number of scholarships are offered every year for full time and more advanced studies at Ruskin College, Oxford, the London School of Economics, and Coleg Harlech.

General and Municipal

With a very similar problem, the N.U.G.M.W. has adopted a rather different solution. All the full-time officials are, in the first instance, nominated and elected by the branches; after that they are permanent. They include the President, General and Assistant Secretaries, National Industrial Officers, Chief Woman Officer, District Secretaries and their Assistant Secretaries, Organisers, and, in the case of certain branches, permanent Branch Secretaries. In practice, the full-time officials have usually been appointed on probation, and thus made themselves known to the membership who subsequently elect them to permanent office.

The supreme authority, as with the T. & G.W.U., is the Biennial Delegate Congress, which is elected by the membership on the basis of one delegate for each 2,000 members in each district. The General Council, which is the equivalent of the T. & G.W.U.'s General Executive Council, consists of ten permanent officials and fourteen "lay"

representatives elected by the membership. It meets quarterly and appoints an Executive Committee of eight, of whom half must be "lay". The District Councils also elect District Committees, which deal with executive business and can sanction strikes of up to 300 members.

The N.U.G.M.W. is organised by districts, but not by trades. The National Industrial Officers, however, are responsible for the different industrial sections, which are as numerous and as varied as those of the T. & G.W.U. In fact, the two unions are to be found jointly in almost every industry. Their relations are harmonious and co-operative. If they were to combine into a single all-embracing general union, such a union would not only far out-distance all others in size, but its potential size would be even greater.

Relations between the general, craft and industrial unions

The main argument against such an amalgamation would seem to be the top-heaviness it would create in the trade union movement as a whole. Moreover, such jealousies and rivalries as exist would be aggravated by the spectacle of so much power in the hands of one union. The craft unions sometimes criticise the general unions for lack of sufficient technical knowledge to negotiate rates in semi-skilled occupations, particularly where these verge on the skilled grades. The industrial unions and some federations complain that the general unions cut across their form of organisation; thus, in the building industry workers other than craftsmen are organised by the two general unions and also by the National Builders' Labourers' and Construction Workers' Society; in engineering, both the general unions compete with the A.E.U. for the skilled and semi-skilled grades.

If the final aim is one union for all workers (as has sometimes been theoretically supposed) then the general unions might claim to be a step in that direction. On the other hand, there are signs of a growing activity in such relatively small organisations as the Chemical Workers' Union and the Tobacco Workers' Union, all of which compete, as potential industrial unions, with the general unions, and represent in part a reaction against the all-embracing character of the latter.

The general unions are also criticised for being more bureaucratic and less democratic than most other unions. The details of their structure given above provide part of the evidence needed to decide on this point, though the real test is not so much constitutional procedure as the way it works out in practice and above all the services which their members actually enjoy. Both unions make considerable efforts to keep up a lively interest among the rank and file. The officials are very conscious of the problem, which is without doubt formidable. The branches in the general unions tend to be very large and this, though it may help with organisational efficiency, is often unfavourable to lively branch activity. Moreover, there is a heavier turnover in membership in the general unions than in most other unions.

Federations

The process of centralisation of union control is likely to continue, partly through amalgamations but also to an important extent by an extension of the alternative system of federations.

The Iron and Steel Trades Confederation is an effective combination of both systems. The constituent unions of the Confederation continue to exist and to maintain separate

identities, but every new recruit becomes a member of the British Iron and Steel and Kindred Trades Association, which is the central organisation of the Confederation.

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions is a much looser alliance. Its development has been retarded by the non-adherence, until quite recently, of the A.E.U. At the same time, the A.E.U. has been making efforts to secure an amalgamation of the numerous smaller engineering unions.

The Printing and Kindred Trades Federation negotiates national issues such as hours, and there is a good deal of co-ordination between the constituent unions—their journals, for instance, though different in format, contain largely the same matter. The many small local and sectional unions in cotton textiles are linked into a number of associations and federations which negotiate national agreements on wages and related issues. Here, as in mining, the local and district basis have their special importance, perhaps because these industries and their unions were highly developed at a relatively early stage in the industrial revolution. In the wool textile industry, twenty-one unions are loosely federated in the National Associations of Unions in the Textile Trades which acts mainly as a consultative body on national negotiations.

Federation in the building trade

A more elaborate kind of federation has been worked out by the building unions. Seventeen unions are represented in the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives. Through this body, building workers speak with one voice on wages and other issues both nationally and locally. The separate unions retain their own autonomous organisations, with branches, district committees, national officials. But the N.F.B.T.O. has also its national officials, and a regional and even a branch organisation.

A "Federation Branch" may be set up in any district where two or more affiliated unions have branches. It is the body which reports any breach of the Working Rule Agreement to the local Employers' Association, and examines applications for overtime permits. It consists of delegates from the affiliated unions, varying in number according to the local strength of the union. It works through a local committee of not more than five members, with a president and secretary elected by the branch. The N.F.B.T.O. constitution also provides for the setting up of "composite" branches in sparsely populated rural areas where the total of building trade workers of all kinds is so small as to rule out the establishment of branches on a separate craft or union basis.

The Regional Councils of the N.F.B.T.O. consist of delegates both from the separate unions and from the Federation Branches. They meet at least twice a year. A Regional Secretary is appointed by the General Council (see below); he can authorise strikes against local infringements of the anti-piecework principle,* and is responsible for regional negotiations with employers. The London Regional Council meets quarterly and in addition appoints a General Purposes Committee to deal with matters arising between these quarterly meetings. Representatives of the General Purposes Committee attend meetings of the Federation Branches and form a link between them and the Regional Council. The London Region is the most highly organised of the Regions. Each union appoints two or more members, according to strength, to the General Council of the Federation, making a total of about fifty members. This body meets quarterly, and the June meeting constitutes the Annual Conference, at which its members elect a President,

* His powers in this respect have been modified by the recent introduction into the building industry of methods of payment by results.

Vice-President and Executive Committee of seven. The outgoing officers are eligible for re-election, and in practice are normally re-elected. A high proportion of the General Council, and in practice, though not by rule, all the members of the Executive Committee are full-time officials of their respective unions. A full-time Federation General Secretary is elected every six years by the ballot vote of the affiliated membership; he is eligible for re-election and in practice he is re-elected until he retires.

The N.F.B.T.O. has achieved a high degree of unified organisation in the building industry, which is reflected in its well developed regional and branch arrangements. At the same time, the difficulties of turning the Federation into an amalgamation of the constituent unions are very considerable. When the question is discussed at annual conferences, it is traditionally opposed by the A.S.W., largest of the constituent unions, and supported by the A.U.B.T.W. Both the A.S.W. and the A.U.B.T.W. have many members outside the building industry. Yet at the job level circumstances make it necessary for members of the different unions involved, including even members of unions like the E.T.U. and A.E.U. which are outside the Federation, to work together in a kind of *ad hoc* industrial unionism. For example, the task of organising the unskilled building workers into one of the three unions catering for them (including the two general unions) often falls to members of the craft unions. Such experiences have led to a demand by some rank and file building trade unionists for a single industrial union for builders, but more immediately feasible perhaps is a reduction, by amalgamation, of the number of constituent unions.

III. UNION MEMBERSHIP IN THREE LEVELS

The trade union reflects dynamic human relationships. To describe how it works, it must be seen in action, and not as a static, legal structure. To give such a description involves the analysis of a varied assortment of facts, figures and judgments. The material to be analysed has many gaps; for the trade unions in many cases either do not keep, or do not disclose, a detailed record of their activities. For an objective analysis, quantitative data are preferable to impressions and judgments, but in the present state of knowledge complete quantitative data are not obtainable.

It is also necessary, in dealing with such complex and assorted subject matter, to adopt some sort of analytical framework. Such a framework has to be used with caution. However good it is, not all the facts will lie neatly within it, and it may lead to oversimplification and over-emphasis of certain factors. But it is none the less necessary.

To understand certain aspects of trade union activity it is convenient to use the framework of a three level analysis, which follows naturally from the discussion of the hierarchy of the trade union movement in the previous section. First, there is the level of the national executive and the permanent officials. Second, the level of the active branch membership, those who attend branch meetings and pass resolutions. Third, the level of the rank and file membership, who seldom attend branch meetings or take part in trade union business.

FIRST LEVEL: THE NATIONAL OFFICIALS

It is a well-known social phenomenon that when a man is placed in authority his outlook is modified. He acquires a "sense of responsibility". At the same time he becomes somewhat removed from the rank and file over whom he has control. A gap develops in language and ideas. At worst the man becomes a jack-in-office, a bureaucrat. He may, however, have a gift for maintaining contact with his rank and file; he may genuinely keep in touch with them, or make an appearance of doing so. All this applies to Members of Parliament, business executives, civil servants, army officers and others. In some cases, where the rank and file has the right of recall, the person exalted to authority has to watch his step and take care to please; the town councillor and Nonconformist minister are examples of this.

The trade union official is a rather special case. He may be either elected or appointed; if he is once elected, he is very seldom turned out of office. There is an obvious gap between his existence as a manual worker and his existence at the union office. The class solidarity which made him an active trade unionist in the first place may persist strongly enough to offset the change in circumstances, even if he becomes a leading national figure in trade unionism. Much will depend on whether his trade union work brings him into close contact with his rank and file. Does he, as union organiser, hold meetings at street corners or outside factory gates, and have discussions with factory committees and local branches? Or is he kept busy at office work, with an occasional meeting with employers at the conference table?

The pattern varies from union to union. Certain features of the relationship between official and rank and file are of a more or less permanent nature. Other features are in process of change. Not only is the national official distinct in outlook from the active branch member or shop steward, but national officials now are different from what they were twenty years ago, and forty years back they were different again. The evolution of individuals is superimposed on the evolution of institutions; the official has grown up and changed in attitude—but so, at the same time, has the union.

Most officials, whether appointed or elected, are chosen nowadays more for administrative ability and less for their agitational exploits than formerly, although even now, in some unions, many secure appointment or election because their political views happen to coincide with those of a vocal minority. It is not unusual for the Assistant General Secretary to become General Secretary: and it is worth noting that, at the time when he enters this subordinate post, he is often relatively unknown to the general membership. Moreover, the percentage of the membership which exercises its right to vote on these occasions is usually low. Broadly speaking, the agitational phase of official trade unionism reached its climax in the General Strike of 1926, and was then rapidly replaced by a more constitutional phase. Some of the pillars of “respectable” trade unionism were firebrands in their time. To a certain extent, the revival of the shop-steward movement has provided a new means by which more dynamic personalities may find their way to leading trade union positions; but even here the war-time emphasis on joint consultation at the factory level favoured the emergence of a type of man who, however strong his opinions, was prepared to be diplomatic and “correct” in matters of procedure.

Unions which have grown by amalgamation over the past twenty-five years have usually inherited, by agreement, the officials of the amalgamating unions. This tends to raise the age-level and to bring in men who by their personal energy were responsible for organising the workers of a given industry or locality.

Union biographies

A series of biographies of officials appeared in the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (A.S.L.E.F.) *Journal* over the years 1937-42. Similar biographies began to appear in the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (N.U.G.M.W.) *Journal* in December 1939, and are still appearing, and there was a short series in the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (A.S.W.) *Journal* in 1929. For other unions there is a certain amount of scattered material. Interesting as it is to read these biographical accounts, it is difficult to extract quantitative details on which to base generalisations, since the officials chosen for biography are not necessarily a uniform or random sample, and since certain important details, such as date of birth, are not available in every case.

The A.S.L.E.F. series gives details about nine full-time organisers (including two retired and two promoted to higher positions). The average age at which they attained this post was 42. They joined the union at the earliest eligible age, and rapidly became branch officials, the average age for this being 24. Five of them passed through the stage of being members of the “lay” Executive Council, attaining this position at the average age of 37. Details are also given of eight other Executive Council members, whose average age on election was 45. Data on their earlier careers are incomplete, but indicate that they took longer to reach official positions in their branches. This union elects its

officials, and interest in union affairs is above the average. These factors, and the absence of amalgamations, probably account for the age of attaining office being relatively low. It is worth noting that an early start in active branch leadership is a common characteristic of those later acquiring full-time jobs. One of the organisers entered a competition for a clerical position at head office, and was there for twelve years before being elected organiser; but he, too, had been a branch official for eight years.

Though they make interesting reading, the N.U.G.M.W. biographies are harder to analyse for statistical purposes. Many of the outstanding figures in this union began as leaders and organisers of small local unions subsequently amalgamated with it. Thus the District Secretary for Scotland began as General Secretary of the Ballachulish Slate Quarries Union, which later joined the National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers, one of the three main unions which combined in 1924 to form the N.U.G.M.W. Another similarly was Secretary of the Bolton Union of Corporation Employees, which joined the Municipal Employees' Association, another of the three main amalgamating unions. Another started in the Dry Dock Workers' Union, which was absorbed in the National Amalgamated Union of Labourers, the third big amalgamating union. Altogether, more than 30 separate organisations are incorporated in the present N.U.G.M.W. and a large number of their officials have been taken over by it.

This process has probably now come to an end. As the officials acquired in this way retire and are replaced, the average age will fall, and the character of the officials may also be somewhat changed. In 1934 Will Thorne, the first General Secretary of the union, retired, and the next three years saw an extensive reconstruction. The age limit for officials was set at 65. The system of districts was revised. The post of Assistant General Secretary was abolished and the four National Industrial Officers were introduced.

At the biennial congress in 1941, Charles Dukes*, then General Secretary, said: "Every officer in this union knows that whereas some thirty years ago your job was at the street corner, to-day it is in the conference room." In the history of the union quoted above, it is said of the past: "There were no national negotiations at this period and all the work was of a local character, mainly with individual firms, and the general attitude of the latter made strikes the rule rather than the exception. Early trade union methods were naturally somewhat crude. The union has thrown up its leaders who were men straight from factory or workshop, whose credentials were sublime courage and force of character, and it is nothing against them to say that they had yet to learn the technique of negotiation." An article in the union *Journal* (July 1943) gives reminiscences of Dukes's own early activities, his difficulties in getting employment owing to his reputation as a trade unionist, and his masterly speech at the factory gates which prevented the breaking of a strike. Most of the older officials had this sort of apprenticeship, but the more recently appointed have a different background. The same issue of the *Journal* gives the story of a newly appointed organiser. He came to the District Office of the old Gas Workers' Union in 1914 as an office boy, aged 14. Demobilised after the war, he continued as a clerk in the union office and was promoted Chief Clerk and confidential clerk to the District Secretary. The *Journal* comments that he "begins as an organiser with the very real advantage of an intimate knowledge of the trades union machine, its operative cycle, its strengths and weaknesses."

* The late Lord Dukeston.

SECOND LEVEL: THE ACTIVE BRANCH MEMBERSHIP

There is usually a certain tension between the first and second levels. The active branch membership criticises the national leaders for conservatism and gradualism and for not pushing wage claims hard enough. The leaders discount this criticism on the grounds that those who make it are inexperienced and do not know all the facts of the case; they deplore ill-advised criticism as undermining confidence among the rank and file. But in spite of this tension, it is from the active branch membership of to-day that there will develop the national leaders and permanent officials of to-morrow. All those at the first level have been through the second level phase. Moreover, it is significant that in spite of all the criticism of executives, when they come up for re-election they are almost invariably voted back to office, apparently by the very section which has been most critical of their official activities.

A trade union branch has a secretary and a varying number of other officials. There may be twenty or more branch members holding some sort of official positions. Thus an A.S.W. branch has from 15 to 20 officers, according to its size, including president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, auditors, referee sick stewards, check steward, money steward, doorkeeper, committee-men and trustees. The branch secretary is uniformly the most actively engaged in branch business; in fact in some cases it is a whole-time job, but as a general rule it is spare-time or part-time. Branch secretaries are usually paid a fee which varies with the number of members in the branch; thus the secretary of an A.S.W. branch with 250 members gets £23 a year. The modest scale of this reward emphasises the essentially voluntary character of the branch secretary's work; and work he has in plenty. In some cases, other officials also have a good deal to do, for example the money steward in the A.E.U. There is much routine activity involved in the collecting of dues and distributing of benefits. There are also as a rule particular obligations on the officials to turn up at the regular branch meetings, held fortnightly or monthly. They may be paid small sums, from 6d. upwards, for each meeting they attend; and they may incur fines of similar amounts for not attending when required.

The proportion of members turning up to branch meetings is on average low. There is a tendency for a nucleus, largely consisting of the officials, to turn up regularly. Many unions have special quarterly branch meetings, and rank and file members may be fined for not attending these unless they present their excuses; similar *ad hoc* meetings may be called on particular issues of importance to the unions, and it is often at these special meetings that voting is taken, whether for election of officers or, for example, on the ratification of a national agreement. A higher proportion of the membership takes part in the meetings where a vote is taken than in the regular routine meetings, but even so, in the majority of branches and the majority of unions only a fraction of the membership participates.

The choice of officials, the determination of union policy and the initiation of wage movements depend on this fraction in so far as they rest on a democratic basis. Moreover, it is from this fraction that candidates are drawn for the higher offices of the union. In fact, as we have seen, it is almost a prerequisite for election to office that the candidate should have been active very early in this fraction. A keen interest in trade unions is needed to surmount the tedium which perhaps inevitably attaches to branch proceedings. The people who have this interest form a small and well-defined group in each branch. They are the backbone of the union and the most stable part of its membership.

Branch activity: size

The activity and vitality of the branches is clearly of key importance in the whole democratic structure. It is highly variable. Branches are organised on the basis of the locality, not of the job, and where organisation on the job is of an advanced type, as in engineering, it may rival the branches in importance.

A potent factor in determining branch vitality and second-level activity is the size of the branch. This emerges from a statistical analysis of the voting by different-sized branches. In general, the larger the branch the smaller is the proportion of its membership which takes part in the voting. Thus a union which has most of its membership in large branches will tend to have a low proportion of voters. This is true of unions in which voting is done at branch meetings. In the printers' unions voting is done through the shop organisation, or chapel, and the size of branch is immaterial. These unions register a very high poll when votes are taken, and this result is to be expected whenever voting is through the shop rather than the branch. In some sections of the general unions, stewards get members to register their votes as they go round the shops collecting dues. This also produces a relatively high poll, but the result may be somewhat artificial unless the vote is taken at a proper meeting following discussion.

Branches vary in size from a handful to some thousands of members. The average in the medium-sized craft unions is about 100, and in the smaller craft unions less than 100. Industrial unions tend to have a relatively high proportion of large branches, partly because the industry for which they cater usually has its main concentrations in certain localities. Thus, N.U.B.S.O. has nearly nine-tenths of its membership in branches of more than 1,000. The National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers (N.U.D.B.T.W.) has more than half its membership in such branches. In mining, where lodges are the equivalent of branches, the average lodge in 1937 (excluding Scotland, S. Wales and the Forest of Dean) appears to have had 475 members. There are also a number of very large branches in the two general unions. Complete data are not available, but the average branch in these unions probably has about 200 members.

Data on the distribution of membership in branches of different size for 18 unions, and average size of branch for 31 unions, are given below.* * Unions with a relatively high concentration of membership in branches of less than 100 include the Association of Scientific Workers (A.Sc.W.), the Shipconstructors' and Shipwrights' Association (S.S.A.), the National Association of Operative Plasterers (N.A.O.P.), the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association (N.A.F.T.A.), and the United Pattern-makers' Association (U.P.A.). Unions where branch size is limited by rule to 500, or where special permission has to be obtained for branches to exceed this size, show a corresponding distribution. This is clearly seen in the A.E.U., which in its transition from craft to industrial unionism has been subject to the factors making for large branches, and which consequently has a large proportion of its members in branches approaching 500.

Attendance at meetings

It has not been possible to obtain for any union detailed figures for attendance at branch meetings. Attendance at meetings which pass resolutions is available only for the A.S.W. An indication of maximum branch attendance is given by the national voting

* See Appendix I, Table I.

figures on different issues in unions where this voting takes place at branch meetings, though these meetings will tend to have a higher attendance than the average. The percentage of the membership voting on various issues has been obtained for 16 unions.* Percentages vary from 2 to more than 30 per cent, but are mainly between 15 and 25 per cent. The general unions, where votes are collected in a different way, appear to muster a poll of about 50 per cent on most occasions. The printers' unions, where voting is taken in the chapels which are based on place of work, show very high polls. Thus, in the London Society of Compositors, of 23 votes taken on separate occasions in 1930, 1935 and 1939, the lowest poll is 56 per cent, the highest 86, and the average 70.

Percentage poll

In unions where voting is taken at branch meetings, two factors are important in deciding the percentage poll. First, there are nearly always a number of branches which do not vote, and these are predominantly the smaller branches. Either they hold no meeting, or, if they do, they do not include the voting in their business. Secondly, in general the large branches show a lower percentage poll than the small branches, and therefore unions with a high proportion of their membership in large branches have a correspondingly reduced average percentage poll. Of the two factors, the second is on the whole the more important. The higher vote in small branches results in a higher total percentage despite the section of small branches which do not vote at all.

On the rather scanty evidence it would appear that the average poll for each union has not varied much over the past 25 years. Naturally, greater interest is shown in some topics than in others. Also, where the total membership of a union has declined, the absolute numbers of voters remains about the same, but the percentage poll increases. A few figures will help to illustrate these points. Of 60 votes by the United Patternmakers' Association the average poll was 22 per cent, the average number of branches not recording a vote was 16 out of some 120 branches. The lowest poll was 9 per cent, with 44 non-voting branches; the highest was 34 per cent, with 4 non-voting branches. For 11 votes on the election of national officials the average poll was 20 per cent, with 10 non-voting branches. The 60 votes were taken in the period 1927-44, and during this period membership of the union shows little fluctuation. Dividing the period in four we find:

	Average percentage poll	Average number of non-voting branches
1927-30 . . .	21	15
1931-35 . . .	23	16
1936-39 . . .	20	18
1940-44 . . .	22	16

In another union, the National Union of Vehicle Builders, membership fell considerably in the middle thirties, and at the same time the percentage poll increased; later, membership rose again and the percentage poll fell. On an analysis of 20 votes, we obtain:

	Average percentage poll	Average number of non-voting branches
1921-31 . . .	22	34
1932-37 . . .	31	30
1938-42 . . .	22	57

* See Appendix I, Table II.

This fits in with other evidence that the second-level membership is relatively unaffected by fluctuations in the total membership. It is natural that the minority which takes the trouble to vote at branch meetings should also be the most persistent in retaining union membership. In a similar way, the great war-time increase in the membership of many unions has not been followed by a proportional increase in the percentage poll.

The trend in N.U.B.S.O. is for an increasing proportion of the membership to be in the large, low-polling branches; there have been several cases in recent years where two or more already large branches have fused into a single branch.

N.U.B.S.O. is the only one of the industrial unions with a very high proportion of its membership in large branches for which figures of this kind are available. N.A.F.T.A. in 1939 had 17 per cent of its membership in branches of more than 500. At the other end of the scale it has a large number of small branches and these show an even greater tendency than those in N.U.B.S.O. to register no vote at all. Taking the average for two votes in 1939 and 1940, whereas in branches of up to 200 members 4 branches out of every 10 recorded a vote, in branches of 200 and over 8 out of 10 recorded a vote.

Detailed figures of voting by different-sized branches are available in the journals and reports of the following unions: S.S.A., N.A.F.T.A., U.P.A., U.B.I.S.S.S., T.A., N.U.V.B. and N.U.B.S.O. Some of the voting in these unions has been roughly analysed in the appendix. In the case of N.U.B.S.O. the analysis is of 14 sets of voting in different years; for the other unions only a few votes have been analysed in detail, but the percentage poll for the whole union has been taken for a series of votes, and this indicates how far the more detailed analysis may be taken as representative. Taking the N.U.B.S.O. figures where the analysis is fullest, we find that the highest overall poll was 34 per cent, the lowest 2 per cent, and the average of 14 votes was 15 per cent. The voting was on all sorts of issues, predominantly the election of national officials and the ratification of national agreements. As there is no obvious trend over the period towards a lower or higher poll, it is convenient to look at the 14 votes taken together. N.U.B.S.O. is an industrial union, with more than 80 per cent of its membership in branches of more than 1,000. Thus the Higham and Rushden Branch had 8,972 members in December 1939; Northampton had two branches of 5,539 and 8,620 at this date. The average poll in branches of this size is 14 per cent. In branches of this size the tendency to record no vote is observable; taking only those branches which record a vote, the poll is 37 per cent.

It is therefore arguable that if the large branches were split up into a number of smaller branches, the number of members attending branch meetings and taking part in important union business would be nearly doubled.

An Executive Committee's comment in a union journal on a vote of February 1922, where the poll was 34 per cent (highest of those analysed) and where the membership were voting on a new national agreement, probably still illustrates the attitude of officials at the national level to small polls in the branches:

"We express our great regret that the vote is comparatively so small having regard to the great issues involved. . . . It may be that those who abstained had full confidence in us that we did our best, and were content to let us rest there. Such a position is, however, very unsatisfactory, because the rules call for a vote of the membership, and while such is the rule, the members ought in our judgment to use their vote, and thus make clear their position upon such vital issues."

Voting on the national agreement in later years showed polls of 12 per cent in 1924 (leading to renewed complaints at the smallness of the vote in the union journal); 19 per cent in 1926; 22 per cent in 1934; 11 per cent in 1939, and 8 per cent in 1943.

It may be of something more than mere historical interest to note that figures for the Amalgamated Society of Engineers for the period 1856-1886, showing percentage of the membership voting on resolutions, are almost exactly in tune with modern experience, showing an average of about 18 per cent for voting members. If similar details over 100 years could be produced for two or three national organisations of other types, we might be in sight of some general conclusions on the percentage of active participation which can be expected from a structure which is a common democratic form.

Some recent work by P E P on local government elections* shows that on the whole (and there are many exceptions to the rule) voting percentages tend to be higher in elections for the smaller than for the larger types of authority. In the case of district councils compared with county councils, where the electorates are identical, this tendency is particularly noticeable. A pre-war investigation, comparing authorities of the same type but of different sizes, came to the conclusion that: "On the average, the largest cities have the smallest [voting] percentages."†

Comparison between different unions

If we eliminate the effect of size of branch, by comparing the poll in branches of the same size in various unions, we find considerable variation. For branches of 100-200 members, average voting figures show:

	Percentage of membership voting	
	(i) in all branches of this size	(ii) in branches recording a vote
N.U.V.B. .	27	33
N.U.B.S.O. .	25	37
S.S.A. .	16	21
U.P.A. .	15	18
N.A.F.T.A. .	12	19
U.B.I.S.S.S. .	7	11

On this showing, N.U.B.S.O. comes out rather well, whereas the effect of its large branches is to reduce the poll for the whole union to a relatively low percentage. However, even in large branches it appears to do better than N.A.F.T.A. and the Vehicle Builders. For branches of 1,000 and over:

	Percentage of membership voting	
	(i) in all branches of this size	(ii) in branches recording a vote
N.U.B.S.O. .	14	14
N.A.F.T.A. .	9	13
N.U.V.B. .	8	8

Further details of voting by different-sized branches are given below.‡ Two sets of voting figures for the Typographical Association show that for this union (and probably

* Cf. PLANNING, No. 261: *Active Democracy—A Local Election*.

† E. C. Rhodes, *The Political Quarterly*, April-June 1938.

‡ In Appendix I, Tables III, IV and V.

for other printers' unions) size of branch is not a factor determining percentage poll; as previously mentioned, this is because the printers' votes are recorded in their chapels, based on place of work, and not in the branches.

It is of considerable general interest that the smaller units should pay less attention to issues on which their voting is required than larger units—as shown by their tendency not to vote—while a higher proportion of their membership turns up to meetings. This probably means that the smaller unit is more effective in purely social and gregarious terms; the members all know each other and there is not, as in large branches, a small nucleus of keen unionists who tend to lack personal contact with the great majority of the rank and file. The branch secretary embodies this situation. If he is secretary to a small branch, he may not feel that it is of much importance what his few members think about the election of national officials or the ratification of a national agreement. His work as branch secretary will be a relatively light, and he will not be so much drawn into national union politics as the secretary of a large branch, who may even be a full-time official.

Consequently, he may take less trouble in calling meetings, taking votes, and sending in reports to headquarters. At the same time, the natural cohesiveness of the smaller group will operate in the other direction and will cause a higher percentage poll when a vote is taken. It would be interesting to compare this state of affairs with parallel situations affecting other institutions with local organisations involving different-sized units.

Resolutions

Besides electing officials and voting on other issues submitted from head office, a branch meeting may pass and send in resolutions. These may become part of a composite resolution discussed at a union conference, as in the A.E.U., or they may act as a form of continuous pressure on the Union Executive, indicating the point of view of the active branch membership on a wide range of subjects. The latter is the case in the A.S.W., and this union is unique in recording in its *Journal* the actual terms of every resolution passed, with the name of the branch concerned and the numbers voting.

It is difficult to generalise on the importance of this passing of resolutions in a way that would apply to all unions, since apart from the A.S.W. very little information is available. But the following points are probably true of all. Branches only occasionally pass resolutions; not every branch passes any resolution at all in the course of the year, and not even the most active branch passes a resolution at every branch meeting. The total inflow of resolutions from branches to headquarters may become a flood in some months and years when there are big issues involved, or may dwindle away to nothing at other times. To judge from the A.S.W., if a resolution is moved at all, voting on it is usually unanimous. It is probable that the majority of motions come from branch officials, that is to say, from keen trade unionists, rather than from rank and file branch members. Consequently the resolutions are on the whole an expression of second-level opinion. This is important in view of the divergence shown in the A.S.W. resolutions between this opinion and that of the first level.

Perhaps the most significant resolutions, though they form a small proportion of the total, are those that deal with wages. A spate of wage resolutions will usually induce the Executives to take some action. On the other hand, this action seldom if ever satisfies the branches. In some unions, including the general unions, this form of wage pressure is relatively unimportant. In the industrial unions, the disparity of wage levels as between

the skilled and unskilled is a complicating factor. In the craft unions, branch wage pressure is found in its purest form. It would be of great interest to find out whether there is any corresponding third-level pressure for higher wages when branches pass wage resolutions. Rank and file opinion on wages is a relatively unknown subject, though it is obviously of importance for understanding the social psychology which is translated into economic pressures. Does the wider rank and file group delegate the responsibility for these matters to the smaller group of active trade unionists who run the branches? Or do the latter respond to stimuli from rank and file opinion when they move their wages resolutions?

For the present we must regard this question as one to which only further research in the field can provide an answer. There is evidence that some of the more backward and unskilled sections of workers regard the movement of wages as being very much outside their control. But the non-voting third-level trade union membership is by no means all of this calibre, and their motives are obscure.

The shop steward

A new factor comes into the three-level analysis with the development of trade union organisation on the job, which in war-time tended to become the focus of second-level activity. The steward is essentially of the second level. He does a great deal of unpaid union work and he is necessarily in more direct and continuous contact with his constituents—in this case the union members in his shop, or on his site—than the branch official can be. In unions where stewards are numerous and active, and where their task extends beyond the collection of dues, the result is to make the second level more radical than it would otherwise be. In such unions, of which the A.E.U. is outstanding, stewards tend to have a closer link with the rank and file of the third level than could be obtained by other methods of organisation, a link which extends to all sorts of personal and domestic matters on which their guidance is sought by members. At the same time, the average shop steward's lively interest in politics may outrun that of the third level as a whole.

THIRD LEVEL: THE RANK AND FILE

Of the three levels, it is the third which is the largest numerically and the most obscure in its attitudes and activities. Since on the whole it does not take part in voting, either when officials are elected or on other issues, such as the passing of branch resolutions, it is largely inarticulate in the union records. There are indications of a tension between the second and third level, parallel to that between the first and second, as suggested in a trade union verse which reads:

Are you an active member,
The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list?

Do you ever go to visit
A member that is sick,
Or leave the work for just a few
And talk about the "Clique"?

Some union leaders will say they can afford to disregard the criticisms of the active membership because they can always count on the support of the conservative majority. This may sometimes be true; but the conservative element is probably partly to be found at the second level, partly in that marginal section of the third level which can be induced to vote on a major issue. Since few unions ever get more than 50 per cent of their membership to vote, even when ballot papers are circulated and special pains are taken to rouse interest, this leaves the remaining 50 per cent as a persistently unknown quantity.

Here then are the majority of British trade unionists, a great question mark in the union structure. Though the records are silent on them, the fact remains that they joined the union. Why? There are many hints as to reasons, most of which common sense will supply. They joined partly to protect their wages and conditions. Figures showing fluctuation of membership show that "third level" members do desert the union if wages fall or negotiations fail. But this is not a simple and direct relationship. Men join for many other reasons—because the union is a club to which their friends belong; for a general sense of protection apart from wage questions; as a mark of solidarity with the whole working class; to qualify for a job in "closed shops"; for insurance and other "benefits"; in a moment of enthusiasm inspired by an eloquent organiser.

This solid bulk of trade unionists is as necessary to the movement as are the roots and leaves to a flower. It gives the movement its catholic quality and its national standing. From it spring the leaders, local and national; from its subscriptions the union finances are built up; on its fundamental loyalty to trade union principles both the discipline and the fighting strength of the movement hangs.

And, though they may not vote much, these men are neither silent nor inactive. Though they do not regularly attend meetings, it is from their attitude, their conversation at work, their obstinacy on one point and apathy on another, that the more "meeting-minded" 20 per cent draw. Moreover, after months of apparent inertia, one day some particular grievance will arise which will bring quite unexpected numbers of them to a meeting. Nor are the "80 per cent" and "20 per cent" constantly the same men. New leaders emerge. Active members in the branch change their work, their family circumstances, or their mind, and sink back into the more silent majority. The figures quoted simply show that, amid this constant ebb and flow, not more than about 20 per cent can be relied upon to attend a normal meeting month by month; and, over a short period, naturally those who are temporarily branch officers will have the best attendance record.

Finally, it is vital to distinguish between attendance at meetings and at least episodic "militancy". Unofficial strikes represent a very determined expression of rank and file opinions and attitudes, perhaps the more determined because the less reflective. Leadership of these movements may sometimes, but not always, come from shop stewards or others technically in the "second level"; but solid support and sometimes the first move comes from the rank and file. In effect, the "80 per cent" are men who lack either the energy or the enduring interest in the political or structural side of trade unionism to attend meetings. They want something done, and they may be more or less willing to accept the advice of the 20 per cent on tactics; but in the last resort they are prepared to go bull-headed for their object. The existence of this great group is in some ways as inevitable as the existence of electors insufficiently interested in the mechanism of politics to attend party groups or even to vote; but with views, attitudes, and prejudices strongly enough expressed and forming the groundswell of "public opinion" which may be quickly whipped up to a storm.

It would need a substantial increase in education and effort to bring more of this body into the area of constant, responsible and directed union activity. The experience of the last eight years has shown that strikes in this period have been basically a third-level phenomenon. On many occasions in the 1939-45 War, when both the first level and second level, including its Communist elements, were opposed to strikes because they harmed the national war effort, strikes nevertheless took place as a result of third-level pressure.

Although the unofficial strike is a special phenomenon, illustrating a breakdown in sympathy and contact between the three levels, the basic situation which can lead to this breakdown in a crisis is constant. It lies in the smouldering resentment of the worker against hardship in his work, and, indeed, his place in society, an attitude, uncomplicated by much thought of the machinery by which redress could be achieved, which is liable to burst into flame at any time. It is only at the second level that this emotion is turned into a reasoned and more responsible effort to achieve specific results by the legitimate trade union methods.

THE FORMAL MACHINERY OF NEGOTIATION

INTRODUCTION

The wages and conditions of the great majority of wage-earners in Britain are covered by some form of collective agreement. These agreements are negotiated between organised bodies of employers and workers.

Over the greater part of industry observance of agreements is voluntary. Because they have arisen from the changing requirements of different industries and of different localities, they are bewilderingly varied in form. No general pattern or logic has been imposed from above on their complexity. Like British common law, they have been built up step by step. But the collective agreements are of very recent growth. They are still evolving at a rate which, while often too slow for the needs of the moment, is rapid considering the scale and scope of their effects.

The evolution of collective agreements is part of the general evolution that is going on in trade union organisation, in employers' organisation, and in State policy and machinery for dealing with labour problems. Both the trade unions and the employers' organisations started as local bodies with limited objectives; gradually, by a process of federation and amalgamation, they are arriving at a simpler, more comprehensive structure. There are still, however, large areas of industry where organisation is imperfect. It is in these areas, as a rule, that the State has intervened. This has been necessary where units are small, and where wages tend to fall below subsistence level. State intervention may also occur with the rapid rise of new industries or the obsolescence and partial breakdown of old industries. But on the whole the most striking feature of our labour arrangements is the extent to which they are still independent of State control and legal enactment.

No account of the negotiating machinery in which trade unions and employers' organisations are concerned in this country, written since 1944, can do much more than comment on and, where necessary, bring up to date the excellent summary contained in the Industrial Relations Handbook published by the Ministry of Labour.* It is unnecessary to repeat the information contained there, and the reader in search of further information should refer to the Handbook. It is, however, necessary to give a picture of the scope of the Voluntary Negotiating and Statutory Wage-Fixing Machinery. This is followed by some general comments on the way the machinery is worked and on some recent criticisms of it to which publicity has been given.

The historical background

The reasons for the great variety of methods by which wages are decided and industrial disputes settled in this country can best be explained by reference to history. The methods are not different answers to the same question, but answers to similar questions asked in different times and circumstances. The period of growth of trade unions and of negotiating machinery has been much longer here than elsewhere, and there has been no Wagner Act or National Labour Relations Board† to guarantee to

* H.M.S.O., 3s. 6d. (*Supplement*, published 1947).

† The powers of both in the U.S. have been substantially modified by the recent Hartley-Taft Act, passed over the President's veto.

trade unions in Britain the right to organise and to bargain collectively. These rights have had to be won.

There are three main ways in which wages have been fixed by conscious endeavour. They have been the subject of decree by the central or local agents of the State; or the result of a bargain between representatives of employers and workpeople; or they have been decided between the two parties chiefly concerned, with the assistance of independent persons. This third form has not necessarily involved legal enforcement of the decision reached.

With the passing of mercantilism, still the dominant economic doctrine in 1700, the State began to abandon its commercial functions and to leave wages to be fixed by the employer. There followed an indeterminate period during which manufacture, with the new techniques of the Industrial Revolution, grew rapidly, and during which trade unions came under the ban of the Combination Acts. From the repeal of these Acts in 1824 there was a steady growth of trade unions and of collective bargaining with employers, especially after 1860. At the end of the last century the State again entered the field, and has found the role it is expected to play increasing in scope ever since.

Ten years before the Combination Acts were repealed, the Elizabethan statutes empowering J.P.s to fix wages and to deal with apprenticeship had also been removed from the statute book. The unions, small in size but with considerable membership in the trades organised at that time, turned to negotiation with employers, at first in the form of conciliation or arbitration by independent mediators. This soon led to collective agreements made direct with employers' organisations.

The State did not enter the field of wage decisions again until the Conciliation Acts of 1896* (it had relinquished concern with conditions of work for a much shorter period, the first Factory Act being passed in 1833). These voluntary joint negotiations produced a wide range of agreements covering not only rates of wages, but hours of work, overtime conditions, piece-work rates, methods of payment by results, holiday arrangements, entry and training of apprentices, demarcation of crafts, and employment of women and young persons. In many of these agreements, too, provision was made for the avoidance of trade disputes and the setting up of machinery for dealing with problems that threatened to cause stoppages of work.

Stoppages through both strikes and lockouts did, of course, continue to occur, sometimes on a large scale. The Conciliation Act, passed as a result of the Royal Commission of 1891-4, which had emphasised the value of the voluntary conciliation boards established between trade unions and employers' associations and had recommended that the State itself should assist in the development of such machinery, placed upon the Board of Trade responsibility for investigating the causes and circumstances of an industrial dispute. It gave power to bring the parties together and to appoint a conciliator on the application of either of the parties, or an arbitrator on the application of both parties. These functions, which were transferred to the Ministry of Labour when it was created in 1917, were widened by the Industrial Courts Act of 1919.

In the meantime a further "interference" by the State in industrial relations had occurred. Trade Boards were set up in 1909 to fix wages in four specified trades where particularly sweated conditions prevailed. These Boards were composed of equal numbers of employers and workpeople, together with independent persons known as "appointed members", one of whom acted as chairman. It was their statutory duty to fix minimum

* The Councils of Conciliation Act, 1867, and the Arbitration Act, 1872, are much less significant.

rates of pay for time-work; they were permitted also to fix piece and overtime rates. Four further Boards were established before 1914.

State social security schemes had not then started, and the Trade Board was a device to put a floor to the wages level. In the setting up of subsequent Boards the emphasis was laid rather on the absence of adequate machinery for collective bargaining than on the prevalence of unusually low rates of pay. Although the two criteria, poor organisation and low wages, are often co-existent, this was a new principle, to be later extended. Other early examples of Government intervention in wages questions were the passing by the House of Commons of the Fair Wages Resolutions of 1891 (and more especially of 1909) and the Coal Mines Minimum Wages Act of 1912.

During the inter-war years, after a period of compulsory arbitration in the first World War, all forms of industrial negotiating machinery flourished. There was a further expansion of voluntary collective bargaining, both in the form of "Whitley" Joint Industrial Councils and in national conciliation machinery. There was an expansion, too, in statutory wage fixing. Thirty-six more Trade Boards were established in the three years following the new Trade Boards Act of 1918. After 1921 the process was much slower, but by 1939 the Boards were giving wages protection to rather over a million workpeople. The boom in new Trade Boards was over by 1921, but compulsory minimum rates were laid down for agriculture and road haulage by other means. In cotton weaving the agreements reached by unions and employers' associations were in 1934 made legally binding in every establishment in the industry, whether or not the particular employer belonged to the association which signed the agreement. This law, passed for one year only, has had its life prolonged by Expiring Laws (Continuance) Acts each year since then, and its effects have been felt far beyond the Cotton Industry, through the influence exerted on the National Arbitration Order and Tribunal and on trade union policy by such a combination of voluntary decision and compulsory enforcement.

This period also produced the Industrial Court and the Holidays with Pay Act, which are described later, and stipulations that throughout certain Government assisted industries "fair wages" must be paid.

The important additions of the eight years from 1940 include the Essential Work Orders (temporary) and compulsory reference of disputes to the Minister of Labour (again scheduled as temporary), new compulsory wage-fixing machinery in the form of Wages Councils, the Catering Wages Commission, and an enlarged Fair Wages Resolution. Not only have modifications appeared in the methods used to fix wages and to deal with disputes, but there has also been a most important widening of the field of consultation to include discussion of the methods of industry itself. Such discussion has taken place jointly between unions and employers in separate industries and in individual factories, as well as in conjunction with the Government over industry as a whole at national, regional, and district levels.

In addition to all these variations of the two main types of negotiation, there are agreements reached, without standing joint machinery, by a union or group of unions with an individual employer or, in the case of the Co-operative Movement,* with

* The National Co-operative Wages Board is representative of the employers' side only. Wage applications are made by unions in the same way as they would be to an individual employer. There is, however, a National Conciliation Board which is jointly representative of the trade unions concerned and the Co-operative Union Ltd., together with an independent chairman.

associated employers. Within each firm, too, countless minor agreements and local interpretations of wider agreements are arrived at—sometimes with the aid of full- or part-time union officials, but more often by shop stewards and other workshop representatives negotiating directly with managements. This last practice is dealt with in detail in the study on “Relations on the Job”.

I. VOLUNTARY NEGOTIATING MACHINERY

In July 1947 there were in Great Britain about 15,550,000 insured workers aged 14-64, including railway workers. Of these some 4,900,000, or some 31 per cent, belonged to six great key industries: coal, iron and steel, engineering and shipbuilding, building and civil engineering, cotton, and railways. Each of these has evolved its own characteristic machinery of negotiation and the distinctive methods adopted by each are summarised in later sections. It may be noted that none of them, apart from Government engineering and dockyard establishments, uses the Whitley machinery which was developed in many industries at the end of the first World War. Some 4½ million workers (a further 29 per cent) were in industries covered by the Whitley system of National Joint Industrial Councils. Among the more important industries covered by J.I.C.s are: bricks, wool and worsted, hosiery, boots and shoes, printing, pottery, docks, chemicals, shipping, national and local Government services, and certain branches of retail distribution.

Coal

Until 1943, miners' wages had always been negotiated on a district basis. Negotiations were conducted in England and Wales through District Boards based on the various coalfields, and in Scotland through a Conciliation Board. All these bodies had grown up separately, with variations in structure and procedure and each acting as a separate negotiating agency. The District Agreements had, of course, many points in common, but the system meant that each district had its own distinct wage rate. At an earlier stage each colliery negotiated separately, and the district system was, in effect, half-way towards a national system.

From 1921 until the General Strike there existed a National Board which acted as a court of appeal from district decisions. In 1930 the Labour Government passed an Act providing for a new national system, but, owing to the refusal of the mineowners to participate, the system never functioned.

In 1942, faced with a critical fuel situation and a succession of disputes in the mining industry, the Coalition Government appointed a Board of Investigation under Lord Greene, Master of the Rolls, to investigate wage claims and arrangements in the industry. The Board not only proposed a national minimum wage but also worked out proposals for national negotiating machinery. An agreement on the lines suggested providing for a National Conciliation Scheme was signed by representatives of the miners and of the mineowners in May 1943. The scheme did not displace the district machinery, but provided for a Joint National Negotiating Committee of twenty-two members, representing in equal numbers the Mining Association of Great Britain and the Mineworkers' Federation. There was also set up, to deal with questions on which the Negotiation Committee failed to agree, a National Reference Tribunal consisting of three permanent members, having no connection with industry and nominated by the Master of the Rolls, together with four assessors (two chosen from each side of the Negotiating Committee) without voting rights.

The national minimum weekly rates proposed by the Greene Board were 83s. for adult workers underground and 78s. for surface workers. The additional cost of the award was met by increasing the price of coal and imposing a levy of 5s. a ton, to be paid into a Coal Charges Account controlled by the Minister of Fuel and Power, from which the separate collieries would be reimbursed. In this way the burden of the award was spread more evenly between the various districts. Subsequently the minimum weekly rates for underground and surface workers were increased to £5 and £4 10s. respectively. These rates were embodied in the agreement of April 1944 between the mineowners and the Mineworkers' Federation, which also included a proviso that no variation in the rates would be sought within the four-year period ending June 1948, except where changes in methods and conditions made variations desirable at individual pits.

A new situation was created when, following the passing of the Coal Industry Nationalisation Act, 1946, the mines were transferred to public ownership on January 1, 1947. In anticipation of the transfer of ownership, negotiations on the question of conciliation and wage-fixing machinery were begun between the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers in the autumn of 1946. By an agreement* signed in December 1946 the Board and the Union adopted and decided to continue, subject to certain modifications, the Conciliation Scheme embodied in the 1943 Agreement between the Mining Association and the Mineworkers' Federation.

Under the new Agreement, the Joint National Negotiating Committee consists of ten members appointed by the National Coal Board and not more than fourteen representatives of the Union. The constitution of the National Reference Tribunal remains unchanged. The agreement also provides for the continuation of District Conciliation Boards, each consisting of six members of the Divisional Coal Board together with representatives of the Union in a number to be determined at the District level, and for the appointment of a District Referee to adjudicate in cases of disagreement between the two sides of the District Conciliation Board.

No provision was made in the 1943 Agreement for the settlement of questions arising at individual pits except where they reached the stage of discussion at the District level. The 1946 Agreement, on the other hand, includes a Pit Conciliation Scheme to provide "a regular, speedy and efficient method of dealing with questions arising at individual pits". This Pit Scheme lays down the procedure to be followed in discussing questions with the object of reaching a settlement and provides for the reference of questions still unsettled to a District Disputes Committee and thence, if necessary, to an umpire, who, in turn, may refer the matter to the District Conciliation Board. In this way provision has been made for the orderly settlement of disputes at every level from the pit to the National Board. This machinery, it should be noted, is entirely separate and distinct from the joint consultative machinery to which reference is made elsewhere in the present series of studies.

Pending the negotiation of a new wages structure for the industry, the Coal Board and the N.U.M. have continued the terms and conditions laid down in the Wage Agreement of April 1944 subject to a modification permitting a variation of the terms of the agreement before the expiry of the four-year period ending in June 1948.† Negotiations

* For a full Summary of the December 1946 Agreement see *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, January 1947.

† Neither side having given the requisite notice for the termination of this agreement, it will remain in force for a further period after June 1948.

for a new wage structure, begun in the spring of 1947, are still in progress and embrace discussion of a guaranteed wage, a pension scheme, and the elimination of anomalies such as differences in shift earnings as between one district and another.

Iron and steel

Despite the decline in the numbers employed in this industry, the joint machinery of unions and employers has worked far more smoothly than in the case of coal. There is a large number of different processes which have different conciliation practices, some of which are embodied in formal agreements while others are based on long-standing custom and practice. Iron ore mining has a national negotiating board and unrelated boards in several districts. There is a national agreement for pig-iron manufacture, but there are district and works agreements as well. Wrought-iron manufacture has declined in importance since the heyday of the Northern Board, one of the most famous and successful of the early conciliation bodies, but the Midlands Board, run on the same lines, still regulates the wages of all workers connected with iron puddling and iron and steel rolling in South Staffordshire and parts of Lancashire.

The largest and most important section of the industry now is steel manufacture. For heavy steel there is a national agreement between the Iron and Steel Trades Association and the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, and agreements with other unions catering for mechanics and maintenance trades. As in iron, the practice until 1940 was to relate wages to the selling price of the product, but in that year the price was stabilised by agreement and changes in rates since then have been related to the cost of living index, except in Sheffield, where the methods general in engineering have been adopted. In melting and rolling basic piece and time-rates are settled by national agreement for some grades while the wages of others are decided by works agreements where procedure is, for the most part, unwritten custom.

In general, arrangements between iron and steel workers and employers are friendly and well organised, and it would be difficult to find any outstanding or long-lasting dispute in the industry as a whole.

Engineering and shipbuilding

The limits of this very large and varied industry or group of industries and occupations can only be fixed rather arbitrarily. At the "heavy" end are the foundry workers; at the "light" end, the fixing of filaments in radio valves. The motor, aircraft, and electrical sides of the industries are all characteristic of the more recent phase of the industrial revolution. In parts, engineering is an old industry; in parts, it is very young.

The joint arrangements for this industry are of comparatively late origin and, in contrast to those in coal, iron and steel, building and cotton, were on a national basis almost from the beginning. They are distinguished by local and national joint conferences, by a well-developed shop dispute procedure and by an absence of automatic arbitration procedure where conciliation fails, although during and since the war frequent recourse has been made by these industries to the National Arbitration Tribunal.

There are some forty-five trade unions of national scope, of which the Amalgamated Engineering Union is the most important. In 1935, a body called the Engineering Joint Trades Wages Movement, representative of the A.E.U. and of the unions comprising the

Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, was set up to co-ordinate national negotiations on the trade union side. This arrangement, however, broke down in 1937, and from then until 1942 the employers conducted parallel but distinct negotiations with the A.E.U. on the one hand and the Confederation on the other. Under pressure of war circumstances joint negotiations were resumed by the A.E.U. and the Confederation in 1942, following the formation of the National Engineering Joint Trades Movement. This body remained in being until 1947, when the A.E.U., following a ballot vote of its members, affiliated to the Confederation, which through its General Executive Council and District Committees now conducts negotiations on behalf of affiliated unions at both the national and the district levels.

The employers have been organised since 1896 in the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation. Outside the Federation are the employers of Wales, Portsmouth and Wolverhampton, while in other districts by no means all the employers belong to their local associations.

The history of national machinery begins with the agreement of 1898, following a lock-out which ended in victory for the employers. The arrangements then made were revised in 1907, while 1914 saw the signing of the York Memorandum, on which all subsequent procedure has been based. Between 1898 and 1940 there were two disputes of national importance (in 1920 and 1922) and five of district extent. The dispute of 1922 was followed by an agreement under which notice had to be given to workers' representatives of intended changes in working conditions. This agreement was signed by forty-eight unions, headed by the A.E.U.; other unions came in later, including the two big general unions (T. & G.W.U. and N.U.G.M.W.), by whose signature women workers in the industry were brought under the agreement.

Disputes in particular shops or works are dealt with in the first instance through shop stewards and works conferences; but, if this ground floor procedure fails, the matter may be brought before a local conference within seven working days. Failing a settlement at this level, the matter may be referred to a Central Conference; this is held on the second Friday of each month (nearly always at York) and considers questions referred to it fourteen days before the date of meeting.

At best, this procedure works well enough, if rather slowly. It has been speeded up by arrangements in some districts to omit the local conference stage when the matter in dispute is obviously of national or general application. A more serious weakness between the wars was the decline in the system of shop stewards and works committees. Though the 1922 Agreement permitted them, a majority of employers did not use or encourage them. During the second World War, a special agreement of 1942 led to an enormous growth in their numbers and influence. Since the end of the war a great many have ceased to function, despite repeated attempts on the part of the Confederation unions to secure the agreement of the employers to their continuation on a peace-time basis. Although unified in its negotiation procedure, the industry has a chaotic wage system, with widely varying district rates, inadequate grading of semi-skilled workers and other problems. In the course of negotiations in the spring of 1946, reference was made by the trade union representatives to the obsolete wage structure of the industry, and the Employers' Federation indicated their agreement to the setting up of a joint sub-committee to examine the problem. When this sub-committee met, the workers' representatives tabled a claim for a new wages structure based on three grades defined as follows:

- (a) The engineering craftsman who has served an apprenticeship.

- (b) The machine operator who in the past had been designated "semi-skilled" and who in future should be designated as "skilled machine operator".
- (c) The labourer.

Although the employers agreed to give the matter their serious consideration, up to the spring of 1948 no agreement on a new wages structure had been reported.

There are separate but on the whole similar provisions for the shipbuilding industry. Since 1926, employers have been united in the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation, which associates with the Engineering and Allied Employers' Federation in collective agreements applicable to engineering workers in general. On the workers' side, there is the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, comprising all the important unions concerned. Since the London Agreement of 1925, general wage questions have been excluded from the machinery and are negotiated direct; other questions go through a similar series of stages to those under the Engineering Agreement, but with better provisions for speed of settlement.

Also separate are railway workshops and Government engineering establishments. The former have obtained, by an agreement signed by the main line companies and 35 trade unions in 1927, a system of shop committees and a National Council. The latter have had Whitley machinery since 1919.

Building and civil engineering

There is a National Federation of Building Trades Employers, comprising many local associations, and a National Federation of Building Trades Operatives, including both craft and general unions. Each appoints half the members of a National Joint Council, based on arrangements made in 1920 and revised in 1926 and 1932. This body has dealt very successfully with general wage questions and many other problems. There is a great and growing degree of uniformity in these matters, comparing favourably with other industries. District variations remain, but are being reduced. There is machinery for dealing with local or district questions, and a system of union stewards on the job, though before the war this was by no means universally in action.

Various factors disturb this integrated picture. There are many non-federated firms, especially the very numerous small jobbing firms which do not employ union labour. The speculative builders of the 'thirties also tended to stay outside the framework of joint agreement. In civil engineering there is a Conciliation Board which may classify the whole country into districts in order to establish minimum rates of pay within county boroughs and urban and rural districts.

Cotton

Standard collective practices were evolved early in this industry, which in this respect was in 1897 described by the Webbs as approaching "the ideal". These practices centre on the famous price-lists, so complicated that only experts can understand them. They were negotiated by joint meetings of the secretaries of the employers' and workers' organisations; the trade union secretaries were selected by competitive examination, from 1861 onwards, to do this expert job. The two secretaries usually worked well together; if they disagreed, there was not much hope that anybody else would understand the issues involved sufficiently well to arrive at a decision.

A dispute in 1893 led to the Brooklands Agreement, providing for methods of adjusting future disputes in the spinning section of the industry. The Joint Rules of 1909 for the weaving section were on similar lines. Unions and employers' associations remained highly diverse and localised, but worked together on general questions.

The Balfour Committee of 1925 was still able to record that those arrangements were working well. But in 1928, with intensified competition from the Far East, Lancashire mill-owners began to introduce "economies of working". Weavers were asked to tend more than the four looms traditionally assigned to them. This led to the 1931 strike and to the withdrawal of the plan. But 6-loom working having again been put forward, and being persistently opposed by the unions, the employers gave notice that they intended to cancel all existing wage-agreements. This produced the big strike of 1932. The Minister of Labour intervened to restore the Joint Rules procedure, adding to it a prices committee and a conciliation committee, the latter with an independent standing chairman. Meanwhile there were parallel happenings on the spinning side.

For conciliation to work it was essential that all actively competing weaving concerns should observe the agreements. Weavers working on 6 looms received, under a new price-list, a lower basic piece-rate for a given length than the 4-loom basic price. But some firms (at first only the non-federated ones in outlying districts) started to apply this lower price to 4-loom weavers. The operatives resisted at first, but later there was a general condoning of departures from the list. Union membership fell rapidly. The process of cutting rates gained momentum until the passing in 1934 of the Cotton Manufacturing Industry (Temporary Provisions) Act, which gave legal force throughout the industry to the wage rates voluntarily regulated between the organised employers and workers. Such a degree of State intervention in the voluntary arrangements of a great industry was without precedent, but so was the situation in the industry, which—to quote the Board of Inquiry appointed under the 1934 Act—"was faced with the possible collapse of the whole principle of collective bargaining".

Railways

In 1892 Sir George Finlay said, "You might as well have a Trade Union or an Amalgamated Society in the Army, where discipline has to be kept at a very high standard, as have it on the railways". Though this attitude to trade unions, and therefore to collective bargaining in the normal sense, was long maintained by the railway companies, the unions gained sufficient strength to call a national strike in 1907.

The mediation of the Board of Trade led to the framing of the first national agreement, signed by thirty-five companies, which provided for conciliation Boards in each of the companies concerned (though they were not established in all) to deal with questions which had not been settled by direct negotiations. This scheme, with some modifications, remained until 1921. The Act of that year, which embodies the re-organisation of the railway companies into four units, also provided for sectional councils and local departmental committees in each of the undertakings with appeal to a Central Wages Board, representative of both sides in equal numbers, and final appeal to a National Wages Board, including a chairman nominated by the Minister of Labour and representatives of railway users. This unwieldy statutory machinery was never popular, and it was replaced in 1935 by a new voluntary agreement. This continued the departmental and sectional committees and laid down channels of appeal from the latter to the Railway Staff National Council and, failing agreement, to the Railway Staff National Tribunal

of three members, one appointed by mutual agreement and one by each side. By consent of both sides the chairman alone may give a decision. An award by the chairman or by the full Tribunal is morally binding.

Other industries

In the six major departments of industry we have briefly considered, voluntary negotiating machinery has been built up which has remained distinct from the Joint Industrial Councils of the Whitley Scheme described in the next section. There is similar machinery in many other industries or in local sections of them. Such machinery on a national scale exists for the boot and shoe, pottery and printing industries, each of which also has a Whitley Joint Industrial Council dealing with non-wage questions. There are national arrangements for saw-mills and leather goods. There are also localised industries such as Stourbridge fireclay or Kilmarnock wool-spinning with their own arrangements. Large firms, such as Imperial Chemical Industries, negotiate their own agreements. Tailoring and baking are examples of two trades with highly organised machinery for some sections and localities, combined with wages councils to ensure minimum wages for certain low-paid and ill-organised branches. There is therefore a very high degree of diversity in the arrangements obtaining, and these are subject to fairly continuous changes and developments.

Provision is made in a number of industries for methods of settling disputes where agreements have not been reached by negotiation, by invoking the aid of third parties and thereby seeking to avoid decisions by trial of strength in strike or lockout. This method involves the calling in of umpires or arbitrators, acceptable to both sides, or reference to further joint bodies with an independent chairman, whose decisions are morally binding on the two sides. Some industries prefer not to set up their own arbitration machinery but to use that provided by the Ministry of Labour.

Because of the position of the Government as a direct employer, the Civil Service Arbitration Tribunal deserves particular mention. Postal workers led the demand for such a body, by a parliamentary agitation which induced the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say in 1913, "there is no worse tribunal in the world for fixing a scale of wages than the House of Commons", and the Postmaster-General to accept the necessity for some authority "to stand between this House and the servants of the State to consider their conditions and their pay". A full enquiry was promised, but the war intervened and it was not until 1917 that the Conciliation and Arbitration Board for Government Employees was set up. In its short existence the Board recorded nearly a hundred conciliation agreements and half as many awards again. It was abolished in 1922 as part of the economy campaign; another reason given was that its existence hindered the smooth working of the Whitley system. Further agitation by Civil Service unions resulted three years later in the setting up of the Civil Service Arbitration Court as part of the Industrial Court, consisting for this purpose of a chairman and two members, drawn from panels appointed by the Minister of Labour to represent the Exchequer and the staff side of the National Whitley Council respectively. In 1936 the name of this court was changed to the Civil Service Arbitration Tribunal. It is no longer part of the Industrial Court, but there has been little change in its composition or functions.

II. JOINT INDUSTRIAL COUNCILS

Towards the end of the first World War, a new impetus was given to the development of joint bodies by the recommendations of the Whitley Committee on Relations between Employers and Employed. This body, set up in March 1916, was asked:

- (a) to make and consider suggestions for securing a permanent improvement in the relations between employers and employed; and
- (b) to recommend means for securing that industrial conditions affecting the relations between employers and workmen shall be systematically reviewed by those concerned with a view to improving conditions in the future.

The Committee issued five reports, of which the first was the most important and is generally referred to as the "Whitley Report". In this report the Committee expressed the view that:

"a permanent improvement in the relations between employers and employed must be founded upon something other than a cash basis. What is wanted is that the workpeople should have a greater opportunity of participating in the discussion about and the adjustment of those parts of industry by which they are most affected".

This quotation suggests that the Committee had been to some extent influenced and impressed by the demand for a share in the "control of industry" put forward by the shop stewards' movement. The Committee recommended the establishment for each industry of a National Joint Industrial Council,

"representative of employers and workpeople, to have as its object the regular consideration of matters affecting the progress and wellbeing of the trade from the point of view of those engaged in it so far as this is consistent with the general interest of the community".

The Committee recommended that J.I.C.s should meet at regular intervals for the consideration of such matters as the better utilisation of the practical knowledge and experience of workpeople, the determination of conditions of employment and of wages (including the methods of fixing and adjusting piece-work and bonus earnings), technical education and training, industrial research and any legislation affecting the industry. Further, the Committee recommended that District Councils similarly representative of employers and workpeople, together with Works Committees representing managements and workers in particular establishments, should be set up in connection with the National Councils. Works Committees were, however, to be excluded from any interference in regard to wages and working conditions which were the subject of negotiations through the National or District Councils, although it was considered that any issue of interpretation in regard to local peculiarities could be discussed.

The fifth and final report of the Committee summed up the recommendations of the preceding reports and affirmed the Committee's conviction of the urgency of the matter and of the usefulness of the proposed joint councils and works committees. This report also included a minority note, signed by five Socialist members of the Committee, which,

while recognising the value of the recommendations made, stated that the Whitley Scheme could not be expected to settle the conflict of interest existing under "an economic system primarily governed by motives of private profit".

The Reports were well received. Copies were officially sent out to 107 employers' associations and to 183 trade unions, while the Government announced that they accepted the recommendations. Between January 1918 and December 1921 73 J.I.C.s and 33 Interim Industrial Reconstruction Committees were established. The I.I.R.C.s were of a less formal character and were intended to be representative bodies in industries which were insufficiently developed for the purposes of full-scale J.I.C.s. Of the 33 I.I.R.C.s, 14 were eventually reconstituted as J.I.C.s. Of these 106 new joint bodies, however, almost half broke down and only 47 J.I.C.s weathered the storm of 1926. They were set up in a burst of "reconstruction" idealism, many of them by organisations which were themselves new and inexperienced, and there was an unwillingness to await slow progress. The collapse of trade after 1920, sharpening all wage negotiations, was largely responsible for the breakdown of many of the Councils.

The second World War brought a renewal of J.I.C. formation, with some 48 councils set up between 1939 and 1945. A further 11 were formed between the end of the war and May 1947, bringing the total number functioning to 114. The principal industries and services for which J.I.C.s have been formed include central and local government, flour-milling, brick, wool and worsted, hosiery, boots and shoes, printing, pottery, docks, road transport, chemicals, and shipping. The scheme was not applied to the older industries such as coal, iron and steel, engineering, shipbuilding, and textiles, mainly because other machinery for negotiation and conciliation was already in operation.

The proposals of the Whitley Committee for the development of a comprehensive system of works committees, allied to the district and national J.I.C.s, were never fully developed. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Ministry of Labour conducted an enquiry and published a report* on the origin, constitution, and practice of works committees. Between 1917 and 1922, well over 1,000 Works Committees were formed, but by 1925 the great majority of these committees had ceased to function.†

It was clearly the intention of the Whitley Committee that problems of production should come within the scope of the J.I.C.s and works committees. Among the subjects for discussion were:

"The better utilisation of the practical knowledge and experience of workpeople", and

"Improvements of processes, machinery and organisation, and appropriate questions relating to management and the examination of industrial experiments, with special reference to co-operation in carrying new ideas into effect and full consideration of the workpeople's point of view".

In practice, J.I.C.s have been concerned with production problems only to a very limited extent. A few Councils, notably those for the boot and shoe, flour-milling and pottery industries, have devoted their attention to problems of research, training, and so on, and some have excluded wage-fixing from the scope of their discussions. But the great majority have remained bodies for the determination of wages and working con-

* Ministry of Labour *Industrial Reports*, No. 2, 1918.

† See *Survey of Industrial Relations* (Committee on Industry and Trade), 1926.

ditions and for the discussion of subjects which normally fall within the range of collective bargaining. The limitations of the Whitley System in this regard were attributed in 1927 by Mr. Arthur Greenwood, who was one of the Secretaries of the Whitley Committee, to the fact that the recommendations of the Committee bore the obvious marks of compromise. In an article in the Industrial Relations Supplement of *The Manchester Guardian* (30 November, 1927), Mr. Greenwood wrote:

“Workers were to participate in the adjustment of ‘those *parts* of industry by which they were *most* affected’ and were to be permitted to discuss ‘*appropriate* questions relating to management’. Labour was not given a position of equality with employers in determining the general policy of industry. The employers were not expected to put all their cards on the table. Whilst it appeared . . . that certain powers of employers were ‘transferred’ to the Councils, certain important powers were ‘reserved’. The functions of joint industrial councils were, in fact, to be more restricted than the functions exercised by many of the joint bodies of employers’ and workers’ representatives set up by the Government during the war.”

As for Whitley Works Committees, with some exceptions such as in pottery for the first few years, production matters did not appear on the agenda. Among shop stewards there was talk of “workers’ control”, but no widespread aim to improve production efficiency under capitalist ownership. Efficiency might lead to more profit and probably to more unemployment; workers on the whole were not interested.* Where they might have been, they came up against the brick wall of “management prerogatives”; for example, after the 1922 strike and lockout in engineering, the unions signed an agreement in which the first article said: “The employers have the right to manage their establishments”.

In spite of setbacks and shortcomings, the Whitley recommendations have left a very definite mark on the structure of industrial conciliation. The original hope that J.I.C.s would become the standard type of negotiating body throughout industry has not been fulfilled. But the industries which are catered for by the general unions, and which employ an increasing proportion of the labour force, have shown themselves suitable for Whitley methods. Again, where an industry reaches a degree of organisation on both sides which removes it from the sphere of statutory provision—where, in effect, good wages and conditions can be arrived at voluntarily—the Whitley pattern may well be adopted.

* Richardson, *Industrial Relations in Great Britain* (1937), gives details of works committees, outside the Whitley system, which did deal with production matters.

III. STATUTORY WAGE-FIXING MACHINERY

It was shown above (page 39) that the conditions of work of some 60 per cent of insured workers are dealt with by one or other of the various forms of voluntary machinery. Many of the remainder are protected by statutory bodies.

In July 1947 about 1½ million workers (or approximately 8 per cent of the total) were in industries covered by Wages Councils. Some of these industries are small and distinguished by a lack of organisation on the part of both employers and workers. The most important of the Wages Councils industries include clothing (which normally employs about half a million workers) and laundries, which in July 1946 employed nearly 160,000 workers.

There were another half a million workers covered by the provisions of the Road Haulage Wages Act, and 650,000 agricultural workers (now brought under a National Wages Board), while a further 750,000 (including 200,000 part-time workers) are covered by Catering Wages Boards. These bring the total up to rather more than 80 per cent of all insured workers. With the subsequent inclusion of a large number of distributive workers in the Wages Councils system, it may be estimated that some 90 per cent of insured workers are covered by negotiating machinery of one kind or another.

Statutory regulation of wages in its modern form dates from the first Trade Boards Act of 1909. This measure was the outcome of widespread agitation and a number of official enquiries into conditions in certain "sweated" trades. The Act empowered the Board of Trade to set up in any trade, in which the wages paid appeared "exceptionally low as compared with those paid in other employments", a Board to fix minimum wages, enforceable by law. In the first instance, Trade Boards were set up for tailoring, paper-box making, machine-made lace finishing, and chain-making. Four other trades were added to the list before the first World War.

In 1917 responsibility for Trade Board administration was transferred from the Board of Trade to the newly created Ministry of Labour. The Whitley Committee recommended an extension of the system, and in 1918 a second Trade Boards Act was passed. By this Act the procedure to be followed in setting up Trade Boards was simplified and the wage-fixing powers of the Boards were extended to include overtime payments as well as ordinary time- and piece-rates. Between 1918 and 1921, 37 new Trade Boards were set up in Great Britain. During the critical period 1920-22, the Boards succeeded in keeping up wages in the industries covered in spite of the post-war slump and falling prices.

After 1922 there was little new Trade Board development until the middle thirties. Between the wars the system of enforcement and inspection was strengthened and improved, and by 1937 about one-fifth of all the establishments coming under the Boards were inspected each year (compared with inspection every eighteen months under the Factories Act).

By the outbreak of the second World War the Trade Board system had gone far to achieve the aim for which it was originally set up—the eradication of the sweated wage. But there were still people in minor occupations in poorer districts who were

outside the scope of all methods of wage-fixing. The Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee had to report in 1938 many cases where persons worked for less than they would have received from unemployment insurance.*

This led G. D. H. Cole to suggest the need for an all-embracing Minimum Wages Commission "to fix basic minimum wages below which no employment should be allowed".† There are many obvious difficulties in assessment and enforcement in isolated cases and while a labour scarcity remains this suggestion is not likely to be extensively pressed.

Wages Councils

The Wages Councils Act of 1945 renamed the Trade Boards‡ and further extended their powers and scope. Whereas the Boards had been related to particular trades, Wages Councils are related to workers employed in the industry, including, for instance, clerical workers. Their jurisdiction on wages is not now confined to "minimum rates" but has been widened to "minimum remuneration", including payment for a guaranteed week. Paid holidays may be fixed above the previous maximum of six days. Moreover, the scope of Wages Councils is not restricted to questions of pay—they may advise the Minister on other problems of the industry, such as training, recruitment and working conditions (see, for example, the Report of the Cutlery Wages Board, prepared in conjunction with the Factories Department, on working conditions in the trade).

The Councils, like the Boards they superseded, are composed of employers and workpeople in equal numbers, together with a smaller number of independent members having no personal connection with the industry and who are often retired civil servants, lawyers, dons or social workers. The employers and trade unionists are appointed by the Minister in a personal, not in a representative capacity, but in practice the names suggested by the various associations concerned are accepted. The Ministry provides the secretariat.

The circumstances in which a Wages Council may be set up and the procedure to be followed have been redefined. The Minister of Labour may make an Order establishing a Wages Council where he is of the opinion that no adequate wage negotiating machinery exists or where an independent Commission of Enquiry recommends that existing machinery is inadequate or likely to become so. Alternatively, an application for the establishment of a Wages Council for any group of workers may be made by a Joint Industrial Council or similar body, or jointly by organisations of employers and trade unions which have together negotiated wages and conditions for the workers concerned. If the Minister is satisfied with the application, he must refer it to a commission of enquiry after notifying any other organisations which may be concerned and considering their observations. These amendments reflect the changed objectives of statutory regulations of wages and conditions. What began in 1909 as the elimination of sweating was extended in 1918 to provide against the absence of voluntary collective bargaining arrangements, and in 1945 to provide not only for the absence of voluntary machinery but also for strengthening and supplementing existing machinery.

* From a long list may be quoted the following examples: greyhound kennelmen, barmen, cinema attendants, window-cleaners, firewood-choppers.

† *The Case for a New Minimum Wages Act*, New Fabian Research Bureau, 1938.

‡ At second reading the Minister said: "The change of name will remove the stigma of being associated with sweated trades . . . we can turn our back upon that bit of our industrial history."

The procedures to be followed in the framing of wage regulation proposals by the Councils and in their enforcement in the form of statutory orders by the Minister of Labour have remained unchanged, except that the time during which objections may be made to particular proposals before their submission to the Minister is now twenty-one days as against two months under the Trade Boards Acts. Wage proposals are usually hammered out on the basis of claims put forward by the workers' representatives and counter-claims or concessions put forward or offered by the employers.

Two other important differences between the Trade Boards Acts and the Wages Councils Act should be noted. First, the new Act empowers the Minister of Labour to establish Central Co-ordinating Committees where the co-ordination of the work of two or more Councils seems desirable. Co-ordinating Committees may be set up either on a recommendation of a Commission of Enquiry or on the Minister's own initiative after consultation with the Councils concerned. Where Committees exist, Wages Councils must submit copies of wage proposals to them and the Committees may make observations on the proposals to the Minister. Secondly, where a majority of the employers and workers in any industry covered by a Wages Council are of the opinion that statutory backing for wage agreements is no longer necessary, they may ask the Minister of Labour to take steps to abolish the Council. Thus in February 1945 voluntary arrangements in the Furniture Manufacturing Industry were strengthened by the formation of a Joint Industrial Council, and in February 1947 a joint application was made by the representative organisations of employers and workers concerned for the abolition of the Furniture Manufacturing Wages Council.

The fifty-one existing Councils cover forty-five trades, including various branches of the clothing and textile industries, food and drink metal ware, distribution, and other services. In many of the industries involved, for example clothing, tobacco, cocoa and chocolate, there are a number of large firms which pay wages far above the minimum rates and make separate agreements with the unions, but there are also very many small firms which it would be extremely difficult to bring into line without some form of compulsion. Where there are small firms there is usually weakness in organisation both of workers and employers, and therefore a need to go outside the structure of voluntary negotiations. Some of the industries are primitive (e.g. drift-nets mending), some employ women workers only (pin, hook and eye-making), some are obsolescent, and others are backward or include a backward section. The Wages Councils system helps to set a higher standard for the development of new industries. But, as standards become higher, as processes become more highly mechanised and units become larger, there is a tendency for voluntary machinery to grow up, supplementing the work of the Councils in the more advanced sections of each industry.

The retail distributive trades constitute a major industrial sector where joint organisation is backward. Myriads of small shop-keepers and traders, scattered over every town and village in the country, with an immense variety of trades, and employing one, two or three assistants each, provide a difficult problem for organisation. Pre-war attempts to establish a Trade Board system for the distributive trades failed, except in the case of milk distributors. A Grocery Trade Board lapsed at an early stage because the unions feared that the rates they had negotiated with Co-operative Societies might be pulled down to their level.

In 1938 a suggestion was put forward for the setting up of a National Co-ordinating Council for the distributive trades, whose decisions might be made binding on all

employers at the discretion of the Ministry of Labour, but legislation to implement this suggestion was not introduced. Meanwhile, the Ministry encouraged the development of voluntary arrangements, and during the war five new Whitley Councils were set up covering most types of distributors. A large number of distributive workers employed by the smaller traders and concerns, however, remained outside the scope of the new J.I.C.s, which in November 1945 submitted applications to the Minister of Labour for the establishment of Wages Councils for the branches of distribution covered by them. Five Commissions of Enquiry were appointed by the Minister to investigate the applications. Upon the publication of the reports of the Commissions, and in accordance with their recommendations, the Minister issued in the summer of 1947 Draft Orders providing for the setting up of eight new Wages Councils (the first to be set up since the passing of the Wages Councils Act) covering the following branches of retail trading: food, furnishing, drapery, outfitting and footwear, bookselling, newsagency, tobacco and confectionery, and hairdressing. With the formation of these Councils, the total number of workers covered by the Wages Council system will be between $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 million.

WAGES BOARDS IN OTHER INDUSTRIES

Agriculture

For many years the farm worker has been in a class by himself, with wages that even since the first World War have at times fallen below subsistence level, in spite of minimum wage-fixing machinery akin to that of Trade Boards.

The Corn Production Acts of 1917 and 1920 imposed a uniform minimum wage. They were repealed in 1921, and the Labour Government of 1924 tried in vain to restore the uniform minimum wage. Until 1940, therefore, agricultural wages were decided by 58 virtually autonomous County Agricultural Wages Committees. Like the Trade Boards, these included employers' representatives (nominated by the National Farmers' Union), workers' representatives (nominated in mutually agreed proportions by the National Union of Agricultural Workers and the Transport and General Workers' Union), and appointed members. The latter, unlike those on the Trade Boards, were frequently criticised as not being properly impartial, and there are obvious difficulties in finding the right sort of people for this job in the country areas.

In 1940 the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) Act gave the Central Agricultural Wages Board the right to fix a national minimum rate for adult male workers and the County Committees were required to have regard to this national minimum in laying down the rates payable in their own areas. By an Order in Council made in 1942 the wage-fixing powers of the County Committees were transferred to the Central Boards for England and Wales and for Scotland for the period of the war emergency. The Central Boards were thus empowered to fix minimum rates for all categories of workers, including women and juveniles, and to reduce the variations in hours and overtime rates that still persisted from county to county. This centralisation of wages determination was a logical corollary of the national system of subsidies, guaranteed prices and assured markets which was the central feature of war-time agricultural policy.

In order to encourage the development of a prosperous and efficient agricultural industry the Government has continued the system of guaranteed prices and assured markets for farmers on a peace-time basis. Moreover, the necessity to make the industry

attractive in order to augment the depleted labour-force has made it more than ever essential to strengthen and improve the machinery of wage regulation. Accordingly, under the Agricultural Wages Regulation Act of 1947, the transference of wage-fixing powers from the County Committees to the Central Boards was made permanent. The Act also removed the limitation, imposed by the Holidays-with-Pay Act, 1938, whereby agricultural workers could not be granted more than three consecutive days' paid holiday and a total of not more than a week in any one year.

Road haulage

Road haulage is another industry with a great number of small units. Before the introduction of the internal combustion engine units of the industry were limited in operation to their own localities; in consequence negotiations were conducted locally with employers' associations, or more commonly with individual firms. National agreements were negotiated during the first World War; but, as the majority on both sides were not organised, efforts to maintain the machinery were unsuccessful. The unions had to revert to local effort, only to find that the long hours worked in some areas were undermining the better rates and conditions negotiated in others.

Recourse was then had to statutory control. The Road Traffic Act of 1930 provided for the limitation of hours, but there was no real observance of the limits laid down and the expected growth of voluntary joint machinery did not materialise. The next step was taken when the licensing system was introduced by the Road and Rail Traffic Act of 1933, which made it a condition of issuing "A" and "B" licences that fair wages should be paid. There was still, however, no machinery by which "fair wages" could be determined, and the unions (chiefly the T. & G.W.U.) pressed the Minister of Labour for his assistance in this respect. A national joint board with an independent chairman was set up, but in many areas its decisions were not acted upon; one great stumbling block was that it was not a condition of holding a "C" licence that fair wages should be paid.

The industry was still too ill-organised for statutory assistance alone to avail, and in 1938 statutory enforcement of wages was embodied in the Road Haulage Wages Act. Part I of the Act provided for ten area boards for England and Wales and one for Scotland, together with a Central Wages Board representative of the two sides of the industry, including representatives of each of the area boards and independent persons. Payment of the wages fixed by the Board for driving of vehicles requiring "A" or "B" licences, if accepted by the Minister and embodied in an Order, is compulsory; if employers fail to pay them they are liable to a fine and can be made to pay arrears.

Part II of the Act deals with "C" licence holders (chiefly retail deliveries). If a worker covered by this provision (or his trade union) considers his remuneration unfair, he may complain to the Minister of Labour, who is expected to make representation to the employer. If satisfaction is not obtained, the matter must be referred to the Industrial Court for decision. In fixing the remuneration the Court must have regard to statutory remuneration fixed in the case of "A" and "B" licence holders, or to that collectively agreed for corresponding work in the district by organisations of employers and workers. Some idea of the nature of the industry, of its difficulties, and of the necessity for improved organisation on both sides, can be gathered from the fact that in the four years 1940-3, years of increasing labour scarcity, over one-fifth of the workers

whose wages were inspected were found to have been underpaid. This is a much higher percentage than was the case even in periods of high unemployment under the Trade Boards, where it was only three per cent even in the years 1930-34. These provisions of the 1938 Act, combining legal enforcement of wages with arrangements for promoting organisation and extending voluntary agreements, typify the useful eclecticism which is a feature of British industrial relations. The scheme draws on the experience of Whitley Councils, Trade Boards and of the Industrial Court. In the summer of 1947 it was supplemented by the establishment of a Joint Industrial Council for the industry, by agreement between the Road Haulage Association and the four unions concerned. The objects of this new Council include the determination of wages, hours, and working conditions on a national basis, the speedy settlement of differences between the parties, and safety on the road. New developments may be expected now that the Transport Commission has been set up.

Catering

Before the passing of the Catering Wages Act of 1943, attempts to regulate wages and conditions in the catering and hotel trades had for the most part failed. The variety of establishments—ranging from the West End hotel or restaurant to the small seaside boarding-house and the roadside café—and the violent hostility of many of the employers to any form of regulation were among the factors contributing to the failure. The industry was, and still is, conspicuous for a lack of organisation among both employers and employed. On the workers' side, trade union organisation was rendered more difficult by the casual and seasonal nature of much of the employment, by the "tipping" system, and by the fact that the industry's labour-force included (in London especially) men and women of several nationalities.

The Act of 1943 provided for the establishment of a Catering Wages Commission consisting of not more than seven persons, some independent and others qualified to represent the views of employers and workpeople, although not themselves directly connected with the hotel or catering trades. The Commission is empowered to examine the arrangements for the regulation of wages and working conditions in any branch of the catering industry and, where such arrangements are found to be inadequate, to recommend the establishment of a Wages Board. The Catering Wages Commission, it should be noted, differs from the Commissions of Inquiry provided for by the Wages Councils Act in that it is a permanent and not an *ad hoc* body. Moreover, apart from dealing with wages and conditions, it may—either on its own initiative or at the request of the Minister of Labour—consider general questions affecting the provision of catering, tourist, and holiday services. Thus, between 1943 and 1947, the Commission considered and reported on such questions as training for the catering industry, the organisation and work of employment agencies in the industry, the staggering of holidays, and the cost of holiday accommodation.

The Commission's main responsibility, however, remains that of ensuring the existence of satisfactory machinery for the regulation of wages and working conditions. Between 1944 and 1947 five Wages Boards were set up by the Minister of Labour on the Commission's recommendation. These Boards between them cover most branches of the industry, including industrial and staff canteens, licensed and unlicensed places of refreshment, and licensed hotels and restaurants. In constitution the Catering Wages Boards are similar to Wages Councils, in that they consist of independent persons together

with representatives of employers and workpeople in equal numbers. Also, like Wages Councils they may submit proposals to the Minister of Labour providing for minimum remuneration, including payment for holidays. The Boards may also fix rest and meal breaks. The procedure to be followed by the Minister of Labour in giving statutory effect to a Board's proposals by the issue of a Wages Regulation Order is similar to that provided for in the Wages Councils Acts.

IV. HOW THE MACHINERY WORKS

The word "machinery" is used so often in speaking of wage negotiating bodies that it is easy to forget that they are composed of people. There is nothing machine-like about the many Councils and Boards described above. However different their powers and functions, these bodies are composed—in whole or in part—of representatives of free associations of workers and employers. In its early forms "machinery" was local and haphazard. Workers' deputations met the management at a single colliery or workshop. Then came the collective agreement between workers and employers in one town, district or coalfield. The "district" stage of organisation has left its mark on the later structures; the separate lists in the cotton industry, the district basic rates in coalmining, and the County Wages Committees in agriculture are examples of a tendency to be found in almost every industry. The main resistance to national co-ordination has come from the employers' side, and in coal and agriculture it was overcome only during the recent war. National co-ordination is now the rule, even if South Wales engineering* and Sheffield steel firms, for example, stay outside its framework, and if the local government services of Glamorgan and Monmouth prefer county negotiations.

As the field affected by a single agreement or decision widened, negotiations came to be more and more conducted by specialists. Trade union representatives were in most cases full-time officers, experts in negotiation and in the complicated details of wage rates and conditions, and needing at their disposal exhaustive information on the commercial side of the industry concerned, its financial organisation and connection with other industries. They must also be acquainted with costs of production, selling prices, profits, and the general position of the trade. Some employers' representatives were proprietors of their own firms or directors of companies, but this side, too, is becoming increasingly composed of officials representing combines, public boards, associations of local authorities, Government departments or employers' associations, the latter often drawn from the professions of law and accountancy.

Thus over a very wide range of industry decisions on wages, hours and conditions are taken by professional negotiators on both sides—people who come to know each other well enough to permit much of the business to be discussed and settled without undue formality.

On the more difficult questions, however, the officials will be conscious of having to carry the approval of a wider body of opinion—the unions' executive committees, annual conferences and branches, and on the employer's side not only the approval of the active members of the employers' association and those sitting on its council, but of the marginal firm which is hesitating to renew its subscription or is wondering whether to join. The advantage of "machinery" in this sense is that on those minor issues which constantly arise settlement can be reached between the professional negotiators. It is only on the major controversies that all the interests involved have to be considered and consulted, and it is here that the delays to which so much publicity was given during 1946 generally occur. Another current criticism, not always made by disinterested observers, is that

* Welsh Engineers and Founders Conciliation Board.

these union officials are "out of touch" with the membership of their organisations. These accusations beg a question. If there is such a lack of contact, who is to blame? The official endeavouring to carry out the decisions of the executive to which he is directly responsible and which is a democratic body, even if a substantial proportion of members omit to use their votes in its elections? Or the member who has not voted and has not attended branch meetings when reports of "failure to agree" or of compromise agreements were read?

In different industries claims for changes in wage rates are put forward and argued on three main grounds (or on a mixture of them). In some, profit figures are largely relied on, in others there is appeal to the cost of living index, or more recently to the less definite "standard of living", while in others wages are related to the selling price of the product (as in iron and steel until 1940). Members of Trade Boards used to base their considerations on the minimum below which no wages should fall, a comparison with wages of persons in similar employment, and an estimate of what the trade could afford to pay. Their recommendations were usually unanimous, for although a decision of the majority of a Board was a decision of the Board, and either side together with the independents had such a majority, a Board which habitually proceeded by imposing solutions on one side or the other was not likely to be long successful.

In recent years there have been suggestions that a more scientific approach to wages is required and "points rating" systems, in use in the United States, have been commended. Progress towards equity between occupations within one industry could be made on this basis, but the difficulties involved in such a "scientific assessment" can be estimated if an attempt is made to compute mathematically and compare the social contribution and requirements of a shepherd with those of a plate-layer, a clay-miner with a bookmaker's clerk, and a tool-maker with a shop assistant.

A third criticism which has been levelled against the "machinery" is that it leads to unnecessary delays, which cause friction and perhaps strikes from which the general public, as well as the industry, suffers. Early in 1947 such a strike occurred in commercial road transport in London—and to a lesser extent in other areas—and many demands were made for an overhaul and speeding up of the negotiating methods employed not only in this but in all industries and services. The public was uneasy, but lacking full information, seemed to be under the impression that members of negotiating bodies were oblivious of time. Unions seeking wage increases are, of course, well aware of the dangers of delay to themselves, and employers are equally aware of these dangers when they are aiming at wage cuts. A Joint Industrial Council is not an automatic machine; neither side is likely to receive an immediate "yes", nor is it willing to accept an immediate "no" to claims submitted. Delay is caused by inability to find a compromise solution, or by the need to consult elected executives or special delegate conferences. Where more than one union is involved, the possibility of delay through this cause is greater. What union members object to is not so much the long months of bargaining as a final failure to achieve the required increase in wages. In voluntary machinery any alteration of procedure is a matter to be determined by the two parties concerned. It is most improbable that the Government would intervene in such questions, and even less probable that either of the parties would invite it to do so. In any case, strikes or lock-outs, from which the public suffer, do not occur because the procedure is slow, but because the parties are as adamant after negotiation as before.

The position in regard to statutory boards and tribunals is different. The T.U.C. at their 1946 Congress passed a resolution calling attention to the delay experienced in making effective the variations in minimum remuneration fixed by Wages Councils, and asked for a speeding up of the machinery governing the issue of notices. At the same Congress the very existence of the National Arbitration Tribunal was attacked on the ground that employers tended "to utilise it to add one further stage to what is a long negotiating machinery in certain industries".* Alteration in the procedures of compulsory wage-fixing bodies requires legislative or administrative action by the Government. The Acts which set out the procedure of such bodies specify certain time limits. In agriculture, for instance, the Wages Board must give public notice of a proposed revision of wages and allow not less than fourteen days for objections to be lodged; in catering, not less than three weeks must be allowed for written representation to be submitted. The Road Haulage Wages Act sets an upper time limit for area boards to report back to the central board on proposals, and such time limits tend to become customary.

The Wages Councils Act lays down a period for objection of not less than twenty-one days and, if a central co-ordinating committee exists, the Minister must wait a further fourteen days for its observations before he may make an order embodying new rates of pay. If the Minister should decide to refer proposals back, then more waiting periods are inevitable. Although these fixed periods could be curtailed and procedure simplified, the main purpose of the Acts might be secured less readily if there were greater haste. It is inevitable that the procedure of statutory bodies should be more formal than is usual with voluntary bodies. Moreover, they have had to be created mainly because neither side is well organised and because employers in these trades have shown unwillingness to enter into voluntary collective bargaining. Since decisions by these bodies, if accepted by the Minister, are legally enforceable, and a breach of them becomes a criminal offence, the State must provide ample opportunity for comment and objections. The particular complaint raised by unions that the time taken by the Ministry of Labour to examine the proposals of Wages Councils is longer than in the case of the trade boards which they replaced may, if true, be due to the fact that the councils have wider but less specific powers than the boards and that their proposals might in consequence need more detailed examination. Then, again, the Ministry has so far had fewer months of experience of this Act than it had years of the Trade Boards Act; greater familiarity may bring equal efficiency with more promptness.

The Ministry itself may be allowed a final word on this question of delays. Their experience has led them to say that further time spent in negotiations often makes it possible for the parties to reach a settlement.†

* *Report of 1946 Congress*, p. 368.

† *Industrial Relations Handbook*, p. 130 (dealing with the National Arbitration Order).

V OTHER EXAMPLES OF GOVERNMENT REGULATION AND MACHINERY

In the introduction to this study the re-entry of the State into industrial wages questions during the last decade of the nineteenth century was noted. Its role in the various statutory wage-fixing bodies has been described above, but the field of its work and influence is much wider than this, and mention must be made of the Industrial Court and the voluntary and informal activities of the Ministry of Labour, of Fair Wages Clauses and attendant obligations, and of the National Arbitration Tribunal.

The Industrial Court

The Industrial Courts Act of 1919 was based mainly on the recommendations of the Whitley Committee which, after reviewing the operation and adequacy of existing conciliation and arbitration procedures, took the view that there should be established "a standing arbitration council . . . to which differences of general principle and differences affecting whole industries, or large sections of industries, may be referred in cases where the parties have failed to come to an agreement through the ordinary procedure and wish to refer differences to arbitration". It was recommended also that the Minister of Labour should be given powers to hold more thorough and formal inquiries into the causes and circumstances of disputes than those provided for by the Conciliation Act of 1896. Rejecting the continuation of compulsory arbitration, introduced under the Munitions of War Acts, 1915, the Whitley Committee urged the restoration of "the system whereby industries make their own agreements and settle their differences themselves".

Accordingly, the voluntary conciliation and arbitration provisions of the Conciliation Act were continued by the Industrial Courts Act, which, moreover, allowed greater flexibility and provided more variety in regard to forms of arbitration. Apart from defining the functions of the Industrial Court, the Act empowered the Minister of Labour to appoint Courts of Enquiry to investigate and report on particular disputes without prior reference by, or the consent of, the parties concerned. The main object of a court of enquiry, which may require persons to give evidence before it on oath, is to ascertain and secure publication of all the facts relating to a dispute, for the information of those immediately affected and of the general public. Although in no sense conciliation and arbitration bodies, courts of enquiry, if they think fit, may put forward recommendations upon which settlements could be based. The report of such an enquiry, unlike those of a Committee of Investigation under the 1896 Conciliation Act, must be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

The Industrial Court is a permanent and independent tribunal and consists of persons appointed by the Minister of Labour. Some of its members are independent, including the full-time President, while others, though appointed in a personal capacity, are representative either of employers or workpeople. In practice the Court is usually composed of three full-time members, one independent and one from each of the panels

representing the two sides of industry; but its rules also permit the President to decide whether assessors should be present to assist the Court. The range of trade disputes with which it may deal is very wide and is defined to include disputes between employers and workmen, or between groups of workmen, "connected with the employment or non-employment or the terms of employment or with the condition of labour of any person". Parties to a dispute cannot appeal direct to the Industrial Court, but must refer their difficulty direct to the Minister of Labour or through one of his Industrial Relations Officers. If the Minister is satisfied that there has been a definite failure to reach a settlement by the normal channels in the industry concerned, he may then, with the consent of both parties,* refer the question to the Industrial Court, to arbitration by one or more persons appointed by himself, or to a Board of Arbitration composed of an independent chairman and an equal number of persons nominated by each side of the industry.

Subject to certain exceptions to which reference is made below, the decisions of the Industrial Court are not mandatory but are rarely rejected, and where a decision is acted upon it forms a part of the contract of employment.

The scope of the Industrial Court's jurisdiction and functions has been extended by developments and legislation subsequent to the passing of the 1919 Act. For instance, all disputes centring on the interpretation of the Fair Wages Clauses have to be referred to the Court for settlement, and it is in these cases that the decisions of the Court carry the force of law.

Fair Wages Clauses

Government contracts since 1891 have included a Fair Wages Clause, the form of which was recast by a House of Commons resolution of 1909. The 1909 resolution provided that contractors should "pay rates of wages and observe hours not less favourable than those commonly recognised by employers and trade societies" in the trade or district; failing any recognised rates, those which prevailed among the "good employers" in the district were to be the standard. The resolution was amended by the House of Commons in October 1946, and the standard of fair wages is no longer that of "good employers" but that established for the trade or industry by representative collective agreements or by arbitration. The contractor is required to observe not only "fair wages" but "fair" conditions of labour as well, including the freedom of workers to join trade unions, not merely during the currency of the contract but at all times. The resolution also demands that sub-contractors observe the recognised standards. Moreover, all new contractors are required to give an assurance that they have observed the conditions of the resolution for at least three months before the award of a contract. Any dispute concerning the interpretation and application of the Fair Wages Clause must be referred to the Industrial Court.

Local authorities also have Fair Wages Clauses which apply to their own contracts. When the new resolution (which had been agreed by the T.U.C. and the British Employers' Confederation before it was introduced in the House of Commons) was passed, a circular was sent to local authorities jointly by the Ministries of Health and Transport acquainting them officially of its new terms and advising modifications to their own clauses in the light of the new Government clause. Fair Wages Resolutions have

* "So jealous was Parliament of the rights of the parties that it did not give the Minister of Labour a free hand to refer disputes for settlement." *The Industrial Court*, by Sir William Mackenzie, who was for a time its President.

not only had an effect on contractors to the Government or to local authorities. During the inter-war years Government assistance was given to certain industries, in some cases for reasons of national defence policy. In giving this assistance the Government stipulated that fair standards should be observed for workers' wages and conditions. The first Act to make such a stipulation was the British Sugar (Subsidy) Act of 1925, which aimed at building up a British sugar-beet industry, and which was replaced by the Sugar Industry (Reorganisation) Act of 1936. Similar to this were the Air Navigation Act (1936), Cinematograph Films Act (1938), and Bacon Industry Act (1938). These State-aided industries, unless they are observing the rates agreed upon by a joint industrial council, have to pay wages not less favourable than those payable under a Government contract with a Fair Wages Clause.

National Arbitration Tribunal

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance, for present and future industrial relations, of the Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order made in 1940 under Defence Regulation 58AA. The ostensible purpose of the Order was to re-introduce compulsory arbitration, as in the first World War, in order to prevent interruption of essential work by trade disputes. It did not entirely succeed in this purpose, and the abortive and unpopular Regulation 1AAA was introduced to give supplementary powers for this purpose.

The extent to which the Order did succeed, however, can be judged from the fact that trade unions, traditionally hostile to compulsory arbitration and determined never to relinquish the right to strike, voluntarily agreed, early in 1946, to its continuance* for a further period of years. The Order provides for reference of unresolved disputes to the National Arbitration Tribunal through the Minister of Labour and requires all employers in an industry to observe wages and conditions not less favourable than those settled by collective bargaining or voluntary arbitration. There are obvious advantages to workpeople in this second provision, and the first is not without its defenders in the T.U.C., as was shown in the debate of the 1946 Congress. Seeking the rejection of a motion calling for the repeal of the Order, one speaker stated that "quite a number of unions were very thankful to have the opportunity of compelling reluctant employers to go before the Tribunal—those employers who generally refuse to meet the unions to discuss or negotiate anything. The Tribunal has been much maligned. . . . I suggest that prior to the inauguration of the National Arbitration Tribunal there was a gap in the machinery for ultimate negotiation and settlement".† The motion was defeated.

Arguments used against the Tribunal during its seven years of existence have dealt more with the composition of the tribunals themselves (three appointed members and one each for employers and workpeople's panels) and the number of claims rejected, rather than with the general issues. Some unions, however, have objected to it on theoretical grounds as restrictive; it has been alleged, too, that the Order leads to delays through the tendency of employers to use the Tribunal to add a further stage to already protracted negotiations. A small point worth noting is that although there is compulsion to refer unresolved disputes to the Tribunal, there is no compulsion on the Tribunal to

* In the Supplies and Services (Transitional Powers) Act.

† H. Bullock (N.U.G.M.W.), *Report of 1946 Congress*, p. 369.

make an award. In one case reported to the T.U.C. the Tribunal had recommended that further negotiations should take place between the parties, and Congress favoured this exercise of discretion.*

Under the Wages Councils Act, Part 3 of the Condition of Employment and National Arbitration Order will be continued (until the end of 1950) after the full Order ceases to have effect, with the Industrial Court taking the place of the National Arbitration Tribunal. The prohibition of strikes and lockouts will be removed and the Minister of Labour will have no power to compel either side to submit disputes to arbitration. He will, of course, still be able to provide facilities for voluntary conciliation and arbitration, and the Act will provide† that failure to observe the recognised conditions in an industry (other than those covered by statutory boards, but including sections of these industries where rates higher than the statutory minimum have been voluntarily negotiated) may be referred to the Minister of Labour by any organisation habitually participating in the settlement of wages in the industry. Where a complaint is not disposed of through the ordinary channels of negotiation and conciliation, in so far as such channels exist, the Minister may refer the matter to the Industrial Court for settlement. The decisions of the Court in such cases will be binding upon all employers and workers in the industry concerned, irrespective of whether they are organised or not.

The obligation to observe the conditions laid down by the Court will not, however, be enforced by inspection, nor will employers be subject to criminal prosecution in the event of non-compliance, although a worker will be able to sue in the County Court for what is in effect a breach of contract. Thus there will be no compulsory arbitration in regard to collective agreements themselves, but there will be with regard to the application of such agreements in individual places of work. Mr. Bevin, in the House of Commons,‡ claimed that this would be in effect “a complete national fair wages clause” and would be more successful in achieving its object than the Wages Regulation Act passed at the end of the first World War.

* *Report of 1946 Congress*, p. 177.

† Section 19 and Third Schedule.

‡ On January 16, 1945. He also said: “The House may be interested to know the difference between the number of wages arbitration awards during the last war and during this war, which I think is the best indication of the enormous growth between the two wars of joint industrial relations machinery. In 1914-18 there were nearly 8,000 wages awards made by the Committee on Production, independent arbitrators, and *ad hoc* courts of arbitration. During this war the number of awards given by the National Arbitration Tribunal has been less than 700. In the last war the majority of awards were not incorporated in the individual agreements. In this war they have been dealt with in relation to the agreements, which make the change-over much easier.” From the time that Mr. Bevin made this speech up to March 1948 a further 400 awards were made by the Tribunal.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the descriptive section of this study the differences between the main types of machinery were noted, but it is most important that their underlying similarities should be remembered. The British system of industrial relations puts great reliance on the voluntary method, on the free acceptance of freely negotiated agreements. The State intervenes not to supersede this method but to encourage it. Compulsory co-operation being a contradiction in terms, the State aims to limit its intervention to encouraging a willingness on both sides to negotiate. Where the State, under pressure from either side or from the public, has tried to intervene more strenuously it has met with rebuff—as for example when in 1930 it sought to enforce national wages negotiations in coal-mining but found that the employers would not participate. The practical sense of the unions generally prevents their requesting State assistance in fields (for example, recognition) where they know that legislation is no substitute for organisation; they know, too, that joint machinery set up by State fiat, overriding the wishes of either party, seldom develops beyond camouflage.

Among the methods described, union preference is for voluntary, joint bodies, free associations, valuing their independence as vocational groups. Their general wish is to negotiate without Government intervention. In those industries, however, where neither side is well enough organised to secure universal acceptance of the terms of agreements, there is a desire for enforcement by law.* In trades where the weakest organisation exists there would be no practical purpose served by providing for observance of agreements which unions are too weak to make; and in these they welcome provisions for the determination of wages, as well as for enforcement. They will seek to relinquish Government assistance as soon as union organisation is strong enough to stand alone.†

Part of a long, composite resolution passed by Congress in 1945 did ask for “the enforcement by law of all wage agreements negotiated between unions and employers”. But this need not be taken as a new all-embracing policy contradicting what has been said above. Unions are not so naïve as to imagine that legal enforcement could be automatic. The Government would not make a voluntary bargain compulsory without examining it, and in cases where it felt the bargain was “against the public interest” would refer it back for further consideration by the two parties, and in effect this would be to bring a third party into the negotiations. Not that a third party is ever entirely absent—the general public is being appealed to, whether or not an attempt to personify it has been made by the inclusion of independents.

What is the position of these independents? Some observers have complained that their task is unnecessarily difficult because they are given no guidance;‡ some trade unionists, on the other hand, have complained that too much guidance is given them.§

* *Report of 1945 Congress*, pp. 256-7.

† *Report of 1944 Congress*, pp. 238-9.

‡ Barbara Wootton, *Freedom under Planning*.

§ W. Stevens (E.T.U.) maintained that the decisions of the National Arbitration Tribunal were coloured by interests outside the actual claims made, and that the Tribunal was being used to introduce Government wages policy into normal negotiating machinery. See *Report of 1946 Congress*, p. 368.

It may not be necessary to say that the discretion of independent persons is not hampered by Government directions, but they are bound to be receptive to the general feeling about national needs engendered by White Papers and Ministerial statements. Nor is machinery on which independent persons sit alone in taking note of this atmosphere, for whichever way its argument points it will be used by one side or the other to support claims in joint bodies from which independents are absent.

The Government and its wages policy cannot be kept out of wages negotiations. Even in the United States the public increasingly look to the Government to "do something" where wage negotiations are not running smoothly, and the Democratic Party is believed to have lost many seats in the 1946 elections as a result of the irritation caused by strikes in coal and other industries.

In Britain, one-fifth of industry will soon be under national ownership. Even if the unions concerned do not seek to negotiate directly with the Minister as well as with the appropriate National Board, the Government of the day must expect to be held responsible both by producers and consumers for the wages and costs decided.

There is yet another development which brings the State closer into industrial negotiations. Among the major groups of political opinion there is agreement that the sphere of government now includes responsibility for full employment, price stability, balance of trade and national economic progress. All these require public planning, and governments must inevitably be concerned with the levels of wages in different industries and services. This concern need not show itself in direct intervention; it need not involve "pegging" of wages; nor does it mean that collective bargaining will be replaced by administrative or quasi-judicial decisions. It does mean that the leaders of industry must be able to see the section of it for which they are primarily responsible as part of a national whole and forbear to use temporary sectional advantages anti-socially.

The wage structure must remain flexible, and changes in it may well remain the responsibility of managements and unions. But the Government must keep both fully informed of the progress and requirements of the national economy and of their own general targets. In this lies the significance of the tripartite machinery linking the Cabinet and individual Government departments with employers' associations and trade unions. This is increasing in importance, not only because of the value of the advice exchanged but because it provides a means of reinforcing the system of joint negotiating machinery and acquainting it officially with the facts of the national position.

But the limitations on direct intervention by the State go beyond the traditional unwillingness of industry to permit it; they arise from the very nature of the problems to be solved. Two examples may help to show the difficulties.

Soon after the outbreak of war in 1939 there was pressure for State control of wages. It was suggested, not of course by the unions, that the raising of wages should not be permitted without the authority of the Ministry of Labour. Such a policy, like other proposals for the substitution of direct Government control for the acceptance of responsibility by industry itself, might only have exposed the impotence of Government and the impracticability of the advice tendered. No administration could have dealt quickly enough with the thousands of applications which would have arrived at the Ministry each week. In any case, the number of factors which enter into the fixing of piece-rates, for instance, and the number of ways of indirectly increasing payments without changing basic rates would have made it impossible to prove that the law had

been broken. Moreover, even if there had been enough prison space to accommodate all the workers who had received higher wages and all the employers who had paid them, it is doubtful whether public opinion, however tolerant it may be of theory, would have tolerated the practice of it. The same answer is commonly given to-day to advocates of a formal and detailed Government wages policy.

It is true that prohibition of strikes by law has been enacted. But Order 1305 was made after full consultation with the representatives of industry;* and strikes have in fact occurred despite it, without strikers being prosecuted under the Order. It has, indeed, been argued that to invoke the courts against unofficial strikers might, by making martyrs of them, cause the majority to change their attitude from one of disapproval to one of solidarity with the minority.

It has been suggested that all claims should be submitted to compulsory arbitration, irrespective of the consent of the parties. This seems to assume that there is a definite, correct answer to all questions arising in the field of wages, hours, and conditions of work; hence that it is necessary only to put a question to an industrial Solomon for immediate satisfaction to be given to both sides (or at least for one to be satisfied and the other compelled to acquiesce). Apart from the difficulty of finding a sufficient number of qualified arbitrators, it does not follow that the force of an award which is legally binding is stronger than that of one which is only morally binding. If, for instance, a union was compelled to go to arbitration under a statutory enactment to which it had not given full consent, the findings of the court would probably be resisted. However, some unions recognise that compulsory arbitration has one advantage to offer them which voluntary agreement does not have—the awards can be made binding on breakaway unions, non-unionists, and individual non-federated employers.

Many trade unionists feel that although willing negotiations and co-operation cannot be forced, there has always been so much compulsion in factory organisation and discipline that it would not be inconsistent for the Government to compel employers to meet workers' representatives for discussion. There is another point on which trade union opinion is mixed. While aware of the difficulties involved in fixing maximum wages by Government intervention, some still favour legislation to fix a general minimum wage. The more common union view, however, is that wage rates should be supported by Government assistance in securing full employment, by social security measures, children's allowances and special protection for disabled persons. No one wants specific wage-rates to be planks in party programmes—and none less than the far-sighted trade unionist, who knows that high wage-rates provide little comfort if prices have risen even higher or if there are too few jobs to go round.

* Conference of Trade Union Executives (May 1940) and meetings of the Minister of Labour's National Joint Advisory Council.

THE SUBJECTS OF NEGOTIATION

INTRODUCTION

The obvious reason, though not necessarily the basic motive, for joining a trade union is to secure better wages. Similarly, the first reason for founding trade unions was to enable workers to substitute collective for individual bargaining over the price of their labour. Implicit in the faith of the trade unionist is the belief that the trade union movement as a whole has helped to raise the average real wage of the British working man.

Yet this belief has by no means been universally shared, and it has at various times and on various grounds been disputed by employers, economists and politicians. It is not proposed to pursue here in any detail the development of the theory of wages, and only those of its features will be alluded to which are relevant to a study of trade unions as an industrial institution. The purpose of the first part of this study is rather to give an account of the factors involved in collective bargaining, so that a general idea may be obtained of the role played by trade unions in the determination of wages.

The second part of this study deals with the other principal questions which form the subject of industrial negotiations. These are hours and overtime; conditions of work; demarcation, apprenticeship and training; and holidays; though the headings do not completely cover the immensely varied range of trade union activity. Of these, only hours and holidays lend themselves easily to national negotiation. Environmental conditions and demarcation problems vary not only from industry to industry but from factory to factory. On the former there has been a great volume of detailed legislation covering standards of safety, ventilation, sanitation and lighting. Much of this legislation has been placed on the Statute Book as a result of trade union pressure and its observance is reinforced by the constant vigilance of the unions as well as by official visits of the Factory Inspectorate.

It is not the main purpose of this study to give a detailed critique of the operation of the Factory Acts and similar legislation. On the other hand, hours and overtime are so closely related to wages, economic incentives and the general economic position of Labour that they deserve rather fuller treatment. The second part, therefore, is devoted wholly to hours and overtime, and brief notes only on demarcation, apprenticeship and holidays are added in the third part. The omission of environmental conditions is far from implying that they are unimportant. With wages and hours, they are of immense significance to the worker and a pivotal factor in industrial efficiency and well-being.

I. WAGES

The structure of wages in this country at the present time presents a picture of apparent chaos. Between industry and industry, job and job, wage levels vary considerably, but in accordance with no visible principle and without relation to the value to the community of the work done, the economic requirements of the country as a whole or even the needs of particular industries and their capacity to pay. Fortuitous in its origins and haphazard in its application, the system or lack of system is widely felt to be unsatisfactory, and there is now an increasing demand for some form of national wages policy which will remove anomalies and introduce a central principle on which socially desirable levels can be assessed—though how the policy is to be arrived at and who is to be responsible for its implementation are questions on which agreement is still beyond reach.

In medieval times wages were fixed, in the case of crafts, by agreement with the guilds, and in other cases usually by the local justices or sometimes by statute. Some relics of the guild system survived even into the early days of the industrial revolution, but it is broadly true to say that at that time all but the highest-grade workers in the new industries were largely unorganised, and wages were fixed on a local basis governed almost entirely by supply and demand. The wage paid was usually the lowest for which the worker could be induced to work and was often at bare subsistence level or even below it, and few employers gave any thought to the long-term effects of under-nourishment and a high death-rate. Later, as the workers' organisations began to make their influence felt, some increases in wages followed, though they were very unevenly distributed; organisation was not uniformly easy (quite apart from legal obstacles), and the first increases were gained in cases where the degree of skill required facilitated the creation of compact craft unions with some control over the admission of new entrants. A second important factor in establishing different levels was the variation in prosperity between trade and trade. Where one industry was prosperous and anxious to attract labour wages rose, and even a subsequent loss of prosperity was not always followed by a return to the old relatively low level; a period of prosperity usually had the effect of stimulating the growth of trade unionism and some degree of protection was gained by the workers. Thus by the end of the nineteenth century it was possible to identify three main categories of labour—highly organised crafts whose wages were comparatively high, less skilled work where conditions were favourable to organisation and where wages were lower than in the former category but still relatively high, and a third category consisting of unskilled workers or workers in industries such as agriculture where organisation was difficult and whose wages were low—though, of course, these categories were by no means watertight compartments and included considerable variations.

In earlier days the view was widely held (and is still expressed in only slightly different terms by some modern exponents of a wages policy) that flexibility in wages was natural and desirable as a means of ensuring mobility of labour. Transfer from an over-manned to an under-manned industry, it was argued, could best be brought about by a relative fall in wages in the first and a rise in the second, induced according to the older theorists by a fall in demand and the creation of structural unemployment in the

over-manned industry, or according to the modern school by a deliberately imposed policy of wage-differentials. If labour were a perfectly fluid commodity, this would no doubt be true—as indeed it is true that high or low wages play a part in attracting or deterring juvenile and other new entrants into industry. But experience has shown that the time-lag in achieving mobility by this means is so great that it does not work. Especially in cases such as coal-mining where an industry is confined to certain areas, even a heavy fall in wages or prolonged unemployment does not markedly stimulate transfer to other industries or areas; the miner, for example, prefers unemployment to the hazards of leaving his home and embarking on unfamiliar work, and it becomes quite possible for a shortage of manpower to exist in one industry side by side with chronic unemployment in another. Consequently, while an industry with a continuing high demand for labour will tend to offer high wages, wages will tend to remain low in a depressed industry; the old belief that over a period and over the whole field changes in supply and demand would eventually level out the major discrepancies by a process of automatic adjustment is bound to be largely erroneous, inasmuch as it makes inadequate allowance either for the difficulty of acquiring new skills or for the inertia which results from the natural human preference for known evils over the risks of launching into the unknown.

Differences in wage-levels, once established, show a distinct tendency to perpetuation. A concurrent phenomenon is the social stratification which is induced by economic differentiation, and this stands towards the former in the relation both of cause and of effect. A certain type of job becomes associated with a certain wage-level and so with a certain position in society, and a social structure develops, hardened by tradition, which it becomes difficult to upset. Even though the value to the community of a particular type of labour changes wages cannot easily be raised in an industry or job where they are traditionally lower without setting in train demands for increases from the traditionally higher-paid. Though this phenomenon is especially noticeable in cases where a single industry includes a variety of differently-rated jobs, it is also broadly true of industry as a whole; its implications for a conscious policy of differentials are, of course, of immense significance and will be returned to later. But it also has its implications for the determination of wages at the present time, since in negotiating a new wage-level for one industry the wages paid in other adjacent industries must be taken into account.

Subject to all these broad factors, present-day wage-levels derive from a long series of uncoordinated agreements, ranging from those negotiated on a national scale for a whole industry to local bargains struck between one individual employer and a small group of workers. The nature of these agreements has been determined by a series of circumstances peculiar to each case, some purely local or accidental, some of wider and more permanent application. The combination of these circumstances, and the relative strength of the two parties to a set of negotiations which derives from the manner of this combination, varies so greatly that it is hardly surprising if, in the absence of any central governing influence, the resulting distribution of wages is full of anomalies.

FACTORS DETERMINING WAGES

What then are the factors which in any particular case determine the outcome of the negotiations? It is no longer possible to say that supply and demand are alone effective. Competition for labour is not free, nor is the worker free to name his own price; while therefore supply and demand for labour of a given type or in a given area may exercise a certain influence on wage-levels, the existence of employers' and workers' organisations

and of the principles and traditions which they represent will in most cases so limit freedom of competition as to constitute by themselves major factors in fixing the price of work.

In relation to a specific negotiation, the chief determinant is of course the balance between the bargaining strength of the parties, which is itself the sum of a variety of other factors. Other determinants include the capacity of the industry concerned to pay the wage demanded, the degree of monopoly in the industry, the level of wages in other industries especially in the same district, current conceptions of a "living wage" and its relation to the cost of living, and in some cases the attitude of either side to the system of payment in force. These determinants will now be examined in turn, bearing in mind that the list is by no means exhaustive.

The bargaining strength of the parties

Definable components of bargaining strength comprise the size, inclusiveness and integration of the organisations concerned, their economic resources and the ability of their members in the last resort to fall back on direct action such as strikes or lock-outs; indefinable components are their negotiating skill and the extent to which they can enlist the support of the Government or public opinion—including the degree of public inconvenience caused by a breakdown—while on occasion the course of negotiations may be profoundly influenced by the presence of a single dominant personality. It is especially on the side of the trade unions that organisational strength is liable to variation. In times of prolonged general or local unemployment membership falls off, the field is widened for undercutting, the non-union worker or the breakaway union, and economic resources are diminished both by the decrease in income from membership dues and calls on funds for unemployment relief, etc.; the decline becomes progressive, the initial weakening is followed by failure to press wage claims or to sustain existing levels, membership declines still further in consequence and further weakening results. As a general rule it is also true to say that wages are lowest in industries such as agriculture where organisation is especially difficult, and highest where the degree of skill required facilitates organisation—though there are important reservations to this generalisation, as in the case of some comparatively new industries where high wages are made possible even in the absence of closely-knit workers' organisations by up-to-date machinery and methods.

Trade union strength and wage-rates display a marked tendency to move in the same direction, though it should not be assumed that variation in one is necessarily a cause of variation in the other; both may in fact originate from a third cause. The diagram opposite illustrates this correspondence.

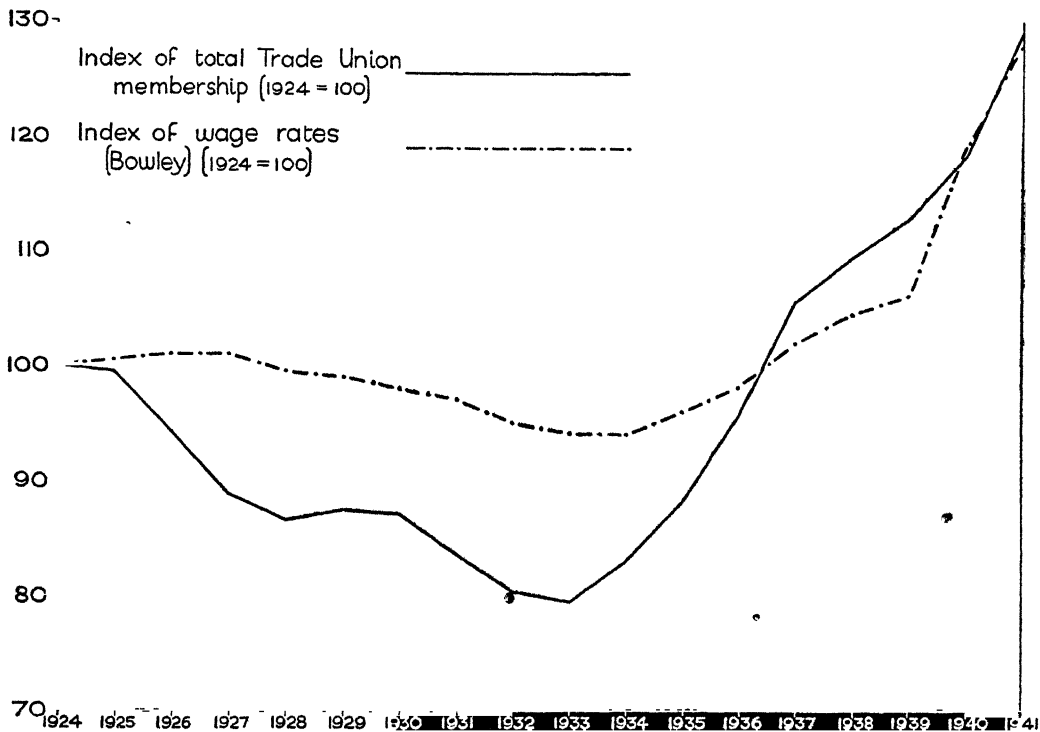
Changes in wage-rates after 1941 were due in large measure to the special circumstances of the war, and are therefore omitted from the diagram. In the pre-war years it is to be noticed that both membership of trade unions and the wage-index declined together to the lowest year, 1933, and then recovered together, though the rate of decline and recovery was steeper in the case of membership than in that of wage rates.

Total numerical strength is, of course, only one of the bases upon which bargaining strength rests. The underlying motive of the trade unions in seeking to substitute national for local agreements was not a mere desire for uniformity; it was felt that workers in a given locality were too weak a force to stand up to employers who could move their works elsewhere if necessary, and that what was of interest to workers in one area was of interest to all others as well. National bargaining is now generally accepted and in many

cases is obligatory; the days of limited local negotiations are passing, and the trade union movement is undoubtedly vastly stronger in consequence. Similarly, in recent years there has been a marked tendency for employers' organisations to assume a nation-wide character in preference to the more limited scale on which they formerly operated.

In any period which it is possible to examine, the balance of strength has been somewhat tilted in favour of the employers. Not only are their resources ultimately greater, but over almost the whole period there has been a greater or lesser degree of unemployment accompanied by the special conditions which it creates; the only exceptions have been periods of national emergency such as the two World Wars and their

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aftermaths. Full employment at such a time does not carry its full effects with it. The unions are indeed in a strong position, but in the national interest have on each occasion refrained from pressing home their full advantage, and it has yet to be seen how far they will be strengthened by a state of full employment in "normal" peace-time conditions. Full employment also facilitates the achievement of the closed shop, which gives the unions a virtual monopoly control of the supply of labour and the power to dictate terms on wages and conditions of work; in practice, however, it is doubtful if this advantage would be fully held. It assumes a greater degree of solidarity over the whole trade union movement than actually exists, and there is a distinct possibility that, once demand for labour exceeds supply to any substantial extent, workers in one industry may seek to promote purely sectional interests and try to profit at the expense of other sections—a serious problem which will be more fully examined later.

The capacity of industry to pay

In conditions of free or partially free competition, and in the absence of assistance from subsidies, there is bound to be some connection between wages and the price of the finished product. Before the war this connection was especially visible in the case of agriculture, an industry in which wage-costs form a high proportion of the total. The small farmer could not carry the cost of higher wages since his farm was seldom of optimum economic size and his margin of profit was small; the level of wages over the farming industry generally was therefore depressed, organisation of agricultural workers into trade unions was for this and other reasons exceptionally difficult, and even on larger and more economically run farms wages remained low. Agricultural wages have more than doubled since 1939, but the additional cost has been met largely by direct governmental assistance to the farmer.

Between one industry and another the proportion of price made up by wages varies enormously. According to figures given by Colin Clark for the year 1930* wages expressed as a percentage of total sales amounted to 7.9 in the food, drink and tobacco industries†, 24.5 in iron and steel, 26.2 in engineering, shipbuilding and vehicles, and 62.4 in coal-mining. In a case where wages form a small proportion of the total, a relatively large increase will have little effect on prices; in a case such as coal, a relatively small increase will be more directly reflected in prices as constituting a greater percentage increase in cost.

Monopoly

Industries whose wages account for a high proportion of cost can thus raise wages by one of three means; by receiving subsidies which guarantee to the producer a price higher than he could expect to obtain on the market, by restricting competition and so raising prices, or by improving technical efficiency. Full or partial monopoly becomes an element in the organisational strength of the employers, but its effect on wages is twofold. As the degree of monopoly increases the ratio of wages to the price of the product tends to fall; but as prices can be maintained at an artificially high level and capacity to pay increased, money wages may in fact be raised. How far these effects cancel each other out is open to question, and nothing can be proved from available statistics; in some industries with a high degree of monopoly wages are high, but railways and the Post Office (to name only two instances where monopoly is complete) still provide outstanding examples of low wage levels.

Wages in other industries

The phenomenon of semi-permanent social stratification as a result of differing wage-levels has been noticed above. A rise in wages in an industry or job traditionally paid at a lower rate than others is often followed by a demand for an increase from other workers—a form of the sectionalism referred to earlier—and in the absence of a central governing authority it becomes difficult to introduce any wage-change which seriously disturbs the existing structure.

Labour is not completely fluid, but neither is it completely static, and a higher level of wages in a particular industry will undoubtedly attract labour from those where wages are lower, especially in the unskilled grades; it will also tend to attract new entrants at

* *National Income and Outlay*, p. 129.

† Excise duty omitted.

the expense of the lower-paid. This movement will sometimes strengthen the hand of the unions against the employers in the lower-paid industries, though as we have seen it is by no means certain that the lower wage-level will rise as high as the higher. The whole question becomes involved with that of the capacity to pay. It frequently happens that an industry with a high capacity to pay is to be classed among those less essential to the general welfare; unskilled labour is attracted by high wages and good conditions, but the industry where the manpower is most needed is unable to offer competitive wages no matter how much the trade unions are strengthened by the shortage of labour.

The factors so far listed are all in a greater or lesser degree imponderable and their influence can be estimated only in general terms. Two others, however, where effect can be more precisely estimated, deserve consideration in somewhat greater detail; these are the deliberate relating of wages to a cost of living index, and the use in certain classes of employment of methods of payment based not on time-rates but on one or other of the various incentive systems.

Wages and the cost of living

The deliberate relating of wages to the cost of living is nothing new. Even in the Middle Ages and Tudor times the current price of wheat or of some other staple commodity was not infrequently used as a basis for wage-fixing, and the practice survived in various forms into the present century. In 1906, according to the Board of Trade Survey for that year, the wages of some two and a half million workers were related to prices in one way or another, though there was as yet no uniform cost of living index.

During the first World War, prices rose with dramatic suddenness. This phenomenon came at a time when the State was interfering in the economic life of the nation to an extent unheard of since the industrial revolution, and when trade unions were coming to be recognised as an important element in the mobilisation of the national effort. In these conditions the idea of varying wages in accordance with the cost of living gained wide acceptance, and though up to the spring of 1916 the Government's policy was to try to prevent wages from rising, after that date, "the continuous rise in prices made it impossible to keep wages down any longer, and during the latter part of the war, they were consciously based on variations in the cost of living". Changes in the cost of living were measured by the official index number of the Ministry of Labour, related to the prices paid by the average working-class family in 1914 for a selection of articles based on a collection of family budgets made by the Board of Trade in 1904.

A number of wage agreements made after the war included a sliding scale, under which wages in the industries covered were reviewed at intervals and altered in relation to the increase or decrease in the index number. To quote from a T.U.C. publication issued in 1922, "the cost of living sliding scale is merely a piece of machinery for maintaining the purchasing power of money wages, leaving the workers' organisations free to concentrate on the improvement of real wages".* At the end of 1922, there were eighty industries, employing some three million workers, operating sliding scale agreements based on the cost of living. Later, the popularity of these sliding scales began to wane and they were suspended or abandoned in a number of industries; by 1939, the number of workpeople covered had fallen to one and a half million.

The second World War brought a renewal of interest in the system and sliding scale agreements were extended to a number of important industries including coal mining,

* *Industrial Negotiations and Agreements*, p. 411.

iron and steel, cotton, pottery and tobacco. By June 1944, the number of workpeople covered had risen to about two and a half million.

The 1914 index, which was still in use in 1939, was however largely outdated by the changes which had taken place in working-class living standards. In 1936 an inquiry was instituted into the pattern of working-class expenditure in order to provide a basis for a new index, but the war broke out before the results of the inquiry could be fully analysed. In 1946 the Cost of Living Advisory Committee appointed by the Minister of Labour in 1936 was reconstituted, and in June 1947 a new interim index was adopted on the Committee's recommendation. It was felt that an index showing the cost of maintaining an unchanging standard of living might be challenged as misleading; to provide a proper guide to expenditure, it was necessary to devise a method of weighting which would reflect changes in the prices of goods and services which consumers were currently interested in buying, and which would also respond to changes in the pattern of consumption. Consequently the new index* is of temporary application only, as it was considered that further time was needed to study the relative merits of different types of index numbers in order to arrive at a reliable system of assessing changes in the cost of living. The interim index shows changes in retail prices only since the date of its introduction; it does not show the rise in the cost of living since 1937-38 (the date on which the pattern of consumption used is based) since the prices at that time of many of the articles used are not known; moreover, because of rationing and other controls, many items cannot be bought in the same quantities as before the war.

At the date of the introduction of the new index, the number of workers covered by cost of living sliding scale agreements was the same as at June 1944, namely two and a half million. The industries affected were faced with a choice of either revising their agreements to bring them into line with the interim index or departing from this method of wage regulation altogether, as had been done earlier in 1947 in the pottery, cotton and wool industries. In October 1947, it was announced that the building employers and trade unions had agreed to convert the sliding-scale agreement for their industry to the basis of the new index. In a Parliamentary answer on October 30, 1947, the Minister of Labour gave the total number of workers whose wages were linked to the new index as 750,000. Among other important trades and industries still covered by the old index are boot and shoe manufacture, wire-rope manufacture, bedding and furniture, and tobacco.

The indications are that there will be an increasing number of departures from the sliding scale method. Both during and since the war, workpeople in many of the industries covered have received increases or bonuses additional to those indicated by movements in the cost of living index, in some cases by direct agreement and in other cases as a result of arbitrators' awards. But even if the automatic sliding scale is not extensively used, cost of living calculations will continue to be important in all types of wage negotiations. In particular, they will still be relevant and useful for determining minimum wages and subsistence allowances.

Payment by results

Systems of payment by results are designed to encourage the worker to raise his output by offering him a financial incentive in the form of a wage increasing in proportion

* Described in *The Interim Index of Retail prices:—A Short Explanatory Note.* (H.M.S.O. 1947.)

to his productivity; the basis of payment is no longer the time worked, but the amount of work performed in that time. The employer is compensated for the additional outlay in wages by the increase in production which follows. Trade union opinion still tends to be expressed against incentive systems and in favour of the simpler time-rates, though the attitude of organised labour is not entirely uniform.

Methods of assessing wages due vary considerably from industry to industry and in different sections of each. The simplest system ("straight piece-work") bases wages directly on the number of processes performed or quantity of material handled by an individual worker or group of workers in a given time, while in other cases various other factors are also taken into account; in some industries (though this practice is now less common than formerly) prices are in addition subject to variation proportionately to the total output of the wage-earner. Where a high degree of standardisation of process and working conditions is possible, piece-work rates are usually assessed on an agreed basic price-list permitting only minor deviations, and the effect of the system is to produce a relatively stable level of wages. The alternative ("mutuality") system is necessarily less rigid and is used mainly in industries where a great many non-standardised processes go to the completion of the product or where materials or working conditions are liable to variation; no basic price-list can easily be fixed in advance, and each piece of work has to be separately valued at the time of its performance. The "straight" system and its variants occur most frequently in the mining, iron and steel, sheet metal and tinplate industries and in the manufacture of textiles, boots and shoes, pottery and glass. The "mutuality" method is chiefly found in branches of the engineering and shipbuilding trades, in limited types of agriculture, and since the war in the building industry generally. Some industries, notably transport, distribution, clerical work and most branches of agriculture cannot be adapted easily or at all to incentive systems, while in others such as dock work both piece and time rates exist side by side or in combination.

Instead of or in addition to the usual types of piece-work payments, some employers pay an individual or group bonus when production rises above a certain level; the amount of the bonus is assessed either on a fixed scale or (as in the Rowan system) on a diminishing scale. In other cases bonuses are assessed on a basis of time saved on an agreed "standard time" for certain operations; here again the scale of payments may be either fixed (as in the Halsey or Weir system) or diminishing (as in some American systems). It is impossible here to describe all the systems in use. It may be remarked, however, that group bonuses (which are, incidentally, one of the principal methods of wage-payment in the U.S.S.R.) are only satisfactory where the group is small. They were successfully used during the war in the construction of Mulberry harbours; on the other hand, an experiment in bonus payments over whole coalfields which exceeded their targets had to be abandoned because of the difficulty of assessing the amount due to each individual.*

Apart from the general principle of whether piece-work should or should not be the basis of wages, trade unions are concerned mainly with two aspects of the various systems. The basic price-list (or in the "mutuality" system the method of valuation) becomes the principal factor in establishing the level of wages, and is fixed by negotiation between the unions and the employers. Secondly, except in a few cases where the piece-work system is of considerable antiquity, the unions have secured a minimum weekly wage based on an estimate of probable earnings if time rates were paid, and below which the earnings of the piece-worker will not be allowed to fall. Agreements on price-lists now usually

* For a fuller discussion of bonus payments, see Margot Heinemann, *Wages Front* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1947), pp. 123-7.

provide for rates which will enable the average worker to earn in a week a certain percentage above the estimated time-rate; these percentages vary considerably—from 4 per cent in sections of the clothing industry to 83½ per cent for I.C.I. employees and (by unwritten agreement) 50 per cent in shipbuilding—but agreements recently negotiated shows a tendency towards stabilisation at 25 per cent above the equivalent time-rate.* A third subject of negotiation is the conditions attached to the “guaranteed week” introduced in a number of industries during the war and still continued in many cases, but the position of the piece-worker in relation to this does not greatly differ from that of the worker on other systems of payment.

The general attitude of the trade unions to piece-work depends very largely on the extent to which the operation of the system can be controlled. A proposal to change from time-rates to piece-rates is nearly always strongly resisted, as when during the war payment by results in the building trade was enforced by Government action only after vigorous opposition by the unions affected. Where the piece-work system has been in use over a long period and enjoys the sanction of tradition, union pressure for its abolition is rare. Yet the objection in principle remains. It is pointed out that when for any reason demand for a particular product is reduced to the extent of causing under-employment or short-time work, the loss to the piece-worker is relatively greater than that borne by a time-worker; earnings are more likely to be affected by external factors such as weather, working conditions, irregular supply of materials or fuel etc.; while even in the absence of these adverse factors the system makes for bad workmanship and necessitates the employment of larger numbers of overseers, weighmen, etc. Increased mechanisation and technical progress, though often cited in favour of the extension of incentive payments as a result of the greater standardisation which they induce, also tend to obscure the part of the individual worker in the production of the finished article and are used by the unions as arguments in the opposite direction—with particular force in the case of highly standardised “belt” processes, in which the worker cannot increase his earnings by increasing output, since the speed of working is governed by the speed of the belt. In coal-mining especially a movement back to time-work exists. Until quite recently it was often difficult or impossible for the piece-worker to earn the equivalent of the minimum time-rate, and the hasty or badly finished work which resulted was held to lessen the margin of safety. New methods of mining, making possible the employment of larger working units such as power-loader teams, seem to favour time-rates, and in its 1946 Charter the National Union of Mineworkers declared its aim to be the general application of the day-wage system.

REAL WAGES AND NATIONAL INCOME

Trade unions and employers are usually concerned in the first instance with wages in terms of money, and only indirectly with the deeper economic consequences of a change of level. The raising of the worker's standard of living is a chief objective of the unions, but is not necessarily attained by a rise in money wages; in order to assess how far the unions have succeeded in achieving this aim, the movement of wages must be examined from two other angles—real wages and the share of wages in the national income as a whole—and some attention must also be paid to factors other than wages which affect the standard of living.

* See for example *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, September 1947, p. 309.

The theory is often expressed, even in modern times, that little or no rise in real wages over the whole field of industry is possible, since an increase in money wages is simply offset by a rise in prices. "High wages mean high prices", wrote the Committee on National Expenditure during the first World War. "Fresh cycles of wage advances succeed one another. Each one results in further increases of prices. The producers are raising prices against themselves as consumers. . . . We are convinced that if the process continues, the result can hardly fail to be disastrous to all classes of the nation." These words were written at a time when consumer goods were in short supply and a degree of monetary inflation was in progress. But the same argument has been heard many times since, with some such phrase as "vicious circle" or the more recent "vicious spiral" attached, and with the renewed shortages of the second World War and its aftermath has been given a new lease of life.

From a quite different viewpoint, some Marxists have argued that in a capitalist economy the standard of living of the workers must inevitably fall in accordance with a law of increasing misery—though Marx himself as early as 1847 pointed out that this fall was not primarily connected with real wages. In *Wage Labour and Capital* he writes: "Wages are determined, above all, by their relation to the gain, the profit, of the capitalist—proportional, relative wages. Relative wages may fall, although real wages rise. . . . If, therefore, the earnings of the worker increase with the rapid growth of capital, the social chasm which separates the worker from the capitalist widens at the same time. . . . The material position of the worker has improved, but at the expense of his social position."

Increased real wages have in fact been gained over a long period, though not in strict accordance with either of these theories. There are two methods by which this can be achieved. The first is by an overall rise in the whole national income in which the relative share of wages remains constant or is at least not substantially reduced, and assuming that the rate of growth of national income is greater than that of population. The second is by increasing the share of wages in a national income which is at least not falling. Both may happen in combination. The measurement of what has in fact happened is surrounded with many difficulties owing to the absence or obscurity of many of the necessary data concerning national income, as well as the lack of precise definitions. What is certain is that in the course of the last century or more the national income has increased faster than population and that the relative standard of living of the working classes is now higher than ever before, while it also seems that the ratio of wages to national income has remained comparatively stable.

According to Colin Clark, real home-produced income per occupied person (adjusted to 1930 prices) rose from about £85 in 1835 to £120 in 1865, and then after a decade of little increase rose steadily to just under £200 in 1913; a period of sharp fluctuation followed, but in 1936 the figure stood at about £215. This, or especially the period of fastest increase before 1913, was an era of great capital expansion and of immensely increased overseas trade, and the actual rise in real income was probably somewhat greater than the figures given. But it is necessary to assume, in order to establish a rise in real wages, not only that the ratio of wages to national income did not fall, but also that the numerical increase of the wage-earning population was not greater than the growth of the part of the national income accounted for by wages.

The statistical difficulties in the way of checking these assumptions and their effects are serious. But the fact of the rise is no longer denied. Rowntree, comparing working-class households in York in 1899 and 1936, estimated the total improvement in standard

of living at about 80 per cent over that period and the rise in real wages at about 35 per cent, pointing out that the effect of the latter was somewhat reduced by the high unemployment figures of 1936.* A second indication of the nature if not the extent of the rise is provided by the history of the cost of living index, which has had to be completely revised in 1947 since the ordinary household budget now includes expenditure on a great many items which would have been outside the reach of the worker when the earlier index was compiled in 1914.

Accepting this increase in real wages as a fact, does it represent any improvement in the relative position of the wage-earner? Or was Marx correct in saying that it was possible for real wages to rise and yet form a diminishing share of national income? In either case, what has been the effect of trade union activity?

Statistics showing the relationship of the wages of manual workers to the other constituents of the national income have been available since 1880, in which year, according to Kalecki, they accounted for 42.7 per cent of the total. Using the same method of calculation, Kalecki gives the following figures for a later period:

RELATIVE SHARE OF MANUAL LABOUR IN THE NATIONAL INCOME OF GREAT BRITAIN (% OF TOTAL)†							
1911	40.7	1924	43.0	1928	43.0	1932	43.0
		1925	40.8	1929	42.4	1933	42.7
		1926	42.0	1930	41.1	1934	42.0
		1927	43.0	1931	43.7	1935	41.8

Keynes, quoting these figures,‡ remarks that they show “an extraordinary degree of stability for the ratio over a period of no less than fifty-five years during which almost everything else has changed out of knowledge.” Later still, Barna shows that even during the exceptional circumstances of the second World War this ratio changed in a minor degree only.§ In other countries (e.g., U.S.A. and Germany) such evidence as is available shows that in those cases too the ratio has remained stable, though not necessarily at the same level as in Britain.

Before commenting on the significance of these figures, it is worth while to compare them with another table provided by Rostas|| relating wages not to national income but to the net product of industry.

Attempts have been made to infer from these and similar figures a general law to account for the phenomenon; but if such a law exists, what is it? And how far is the maintenance of the ratio in either case influenced by trade union activity? It is immediately to be noticed that variations in either table bear no obvious relationship to fluctuations in the general level of trade. The second table does, however, offer ground for comparison between the movement of the ratio in Germany and U.S.A. and the state of trade unionism in those countries; in column three, the sharp fall from 1929 to 1932 coincides with the deflationary period associated with the Young Plan and the later decline perhaps reflects the suppression of the trade unions under the Nazi regime; while

* *Poverty and Progress* (Longmans, 1941), pp. 453-4.

† *Economic Fluctuations*, pp. 16-17.

‡ *Economic Journal*, March 1939, p. 48.

§ *Profits during and after the War* (Fabian Society 1945). Barna's figures are calculated on a somewhat different basis from the above.

|| *Economic Journal*, April 1943, p. 53.

SHARE OF WAGES IN THE VALUE OF NET OUTPUT
(percentages)

	United Kingdom		Germany	United States
	(a)	(b)	(b)	(a)
1923	—	—	—	41.3
1924	45.3	52.1	—	—
1925	—	—	—	38.8
1927	—	—	—	38.3
1929	—	—	38.2	35.5
1930	45.4	50.6	—	—
1931	—	—	—	36.0
1932	—	—	30.1	—
1933	—	—	32.5	35.3
1934	—	—	32.0	—
1935	44.3	48.7	31.2	39.4
1936	—	—	30.6	—
1937	—	—	30.5	40.2
1938*	43.8	47.6(c)	31.0	—

(a) Factory trades.

(b) All manufacturing trades including mining, building and contracting and—for Germany—public utilities.

(c) Factory trades and coalmining, but excluding other forms of mining and building.

in column four the rise from 1933 onwards may be associated with the increased militancy of the unions under the New Deal. The British figures in columns one and two cannot be so easily explained. The trade unions were increasing in membership and in strength from 1935 onwards, but the ratio continued to fall for at any rate three years after that date, and though there is evidence that it rose again during and immediately after the war, it would be unwise to draw general conclusions from the special circumstances of those years. In the use of the figures themselves some caution is also necessary as they represent averages only and mask much wider variations in certain cases; for example, Colin Clark shows that in the case of railways and railway workshops the ratio of wages to net output rose from 38.9 per cent in 1911 to 55.5 per cent in 1930,[†] and other similar examples could be quoted.

The fact of an almost stable ratio is there, at least in the case of the relationship between wages and national income. Short of embarking on a full theoretical analysis which would be outside the scope of the present study, what can be said in explanation of a phenomenon which Keynes himself could only describe as "a bit of a miracle"? Obviously so striking a fact must be explainable; if no explanation is at present available, it is to be hoped that further study will in time find one. The most that can be put forward here is the apparently obvious assertion that these ratios result from the establishment of an equilibrium between the forces tending to increase wages in relation to the other components of national income and those tending to depress them. It is probable that if there were no trade unions the most important of the former forces would not be present, and the theory put forward by Marx would be correct; even if real wages rose, "relative wages" would fall. In the other theory (that a rise in real wages is impossible) there is perhaps this much of truth, that in most conditions short of galloping inflation a rise in

* The British figures for 1938 are approximate only.

† *National Income and Outlay*, p. 125.

money wages is reflected by increased prices, though not to the full extent. Increased national income means both increased real wages and increased profits, etc. (the other components of national income), but if the rise in real wages becomes such as to lead to a possibility that the ratio will be increased, the balance is adjusted by increased prices in favour of profits; and if pressure for higher wages is maintained, a degree of inflation is created. In the conditions which existed in this country before 1939, price-fixing was something over which the employers obviously had more control than the trade unions, so that the process invariably operated in their favour; on the other hand, continuous pressure from the trade unions for the maintenance of wage levels in both money and real terms prevented the balance from being unduly tipped against them. It would appear that the only ways in which the ratio could be substantially altered in either direction would be by radical changes in the economic structure of the country—by a great extension of socialisation or Government control of industry (especially prices) on the one hand, or by the suppression of trade unions and full governmental support for the employers on the other. In the meantime, while trade union activity has not succeeded in raising the ratio, it has at least succeeded in preventing it from being seriously reduced.

THE SOCIAL REDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

Wages are not, however, the only factor governing the standard of living of the wage-earner. Over the period described, wages have increased and have had their effect in improving living conditions, but in addition over the same period the ratio of real purchasing power among the various income groups has been appreciably modified by direct governmental action.

The theory behind the social redistribution of income is simple, though not universally accepted. Quite apart from the moral desirability of ensuring a decent standard of living, trade union and socialist thought has for many years developed along "consumptionist" lines; increased purchasing power on the part of the lower paid sections of society creates increased demand for goods, stimulates trade, and need not reduce the amount of money available for investment. Though widely contested before 1914, this view gained ground between 1918 and 1939 during a period when under-consumption was frequently held to be the cause of most economic ills; and in 1936 Keynes, in his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, gave the first fully worked out expression to the view that an expansion of purchasing power is desirable on economic grounds at any rate up to the point where full employment is reached.

In the early years of the present century it was social and political pressure rather than any considered economic theory which accounted for the introduction of social legislation. By 1937 (the last year for which a full analysis is available*) the social services of the central government and local authorities accounted for a total gross expenditure of about £580 million, of which rather less than half was met by the central Government, rather over a quarter by the Rate Fund, and the remainder by insurance and other contributions from the public. During the war the scope of redistribution was greatly increased both by the extension of the existing services and the introduction of new forms of expenditure such as subsidies on food and other essentials designed to stabilise the cost of living; post-war legislation by the Labour Government has not only maintained the war-time redistribution but has extended its operation still further, and the Government

* T. Barna, *The Redistribution of Incomes in 1937*.

has at various times made clear its intention at least to preserve the present level of social services as part of the normal peace-time economic system.

Social legislation is not, however, the only means of redistribution of income—or more accurately, is not the only method of altering the ratio between the purchasing power of economic classes. It is now a great many years since the principle of differential taxation was first accepted, and over the last half-century direct taxation on a progressive scale has assumed an increasing social importance. During the war the heavy increase in taxation was met chiefly by the wealthier classes and the rate of progression steeply increased, as the following comparison of the years 1938 and 1946 shows.

PROPORTION OF INCOME BEFORE TAXATION RETAINED AFTER
DEDUCTION OF TAXES BY INCOME GROUPS, 1938 AND 1946*

Income Group	1938	1946
Under £250	99.8	98.9
£250–£500	97.5	92.3
£500–£1,000	91.2	79.9
£1,000–£2,000	85.2	69.6
£2,000–£10,000	70.8	53.6
Over £10,000	43.4	23.6

Since the war such tax reliefs as have been possible have been chiefly in favour of the lower-income groups, the highest groups of all being required to contribute a still greater proportion of the total. Even if none of the proceeds of taxation were expended on social services, this high degree of differentiation would go a long way towards levelling out differences in purchasing power.

The effect of these methods of transferring income from the higher to the lower groups is therefore to increase the purchasing power of the latter independently of the relative or absolute level of wages. Indirectly another effect exists; a sort of economic cushion is created to absorb some of the shock of unemployment, strengthening the position of the union member in negotiations for the raising or maintenance of wages, and thus also acting as a partial safeguard against excessively low wages.†

The trade unions cannot, of course, claim direct credit for the achievement of social redistribution. They may perhaps say with truth that it is largely as a result of their work in the past that the Government and the public have been converted to the consumptionist theory on which redistribution is in principle primarily based; they may also be able, through direct contact with the Government and through individual trade unionists who are members of the Government or of Parliament, to exercise day to day pressure for the maintenance or extension of the scope of redistribution measures. For obvious reasons pressure of this sort is most likely to be effective with a Labour Government in power, the more so as its members are likely to accept the desirability of redistribution. In the autumn of 1947, for example, the Government decided, when faced with opposite

* Digested from Table 16 (p. 19) of *National Income and Expenditure of the United Kingdom 1947*. Cmd. 7371.

† In South Wales before the war, for example, a trading estate opened in an area of acute unemployment met with some difficulty in attracting female and juvenile labour, since it was found that the rate of wages paid, when offset by travelling costs, increased expenditure on clothes and food and deductions from unemployment benefit under the household Means Test, left so small a real residue that the families of many unemployed men regarded continued unemployment as economically preferable.

arguments from some sections in favour of reducing food subsidies and from the T.U.C. and elsewhere in favour of retaining them, to maintain them at their present level at least for the time being. In other respects, the rate of redistribution has been markedly increased since the end of the war by the extension of social services, increased pensions, etc., and on many occasions responsible Ministers have made it clear that it is their aim to maintain the level of redistribution undiminished and perhaps even to extend its operation to further fields.

A NATIONAL WAGES POLICY

In order to remove some of the unsatisfactory features of the present wage structure and to reduce it to a more orderly shape, numerous suggestions have been put forward for a national wages policy. It is not proposed to embark here on a full examination of this complex and controversial problem. But a study on wages would be incomplete without some observations, even if they consist of little more than a plea that the whole question should be submitted to more intensive and more exact investigation than it has yet received.

Certain elements are common to most of the plans proposed. The plans themselves range from simple proposals for discouraging some wage changes while encouraging others to elaborate schemes of job-evaluation and point-rating under which all changes would be carefully controlled in accordance with a centrally determined pattern. Most plans put forward have three main objects. The first aim is the permanent correlation of wages to whatever general economic plan is in force, and their use—especially important in a state of full employment—as a means of attracting labour where it is most needed. The second aim is the provision of a co-ordinated incentive system on a national scale to encourage the best use and the maximum productivity of labour as distributed. The third, a shorter-term requirement, is the avoidance of inflationary pressure through unregulated increases in wages. From a full or partial synthesis of these aims—and it will be asked later whether they are in fact fully reconcilable—is derived the type of wages policy most usually advocated. Most plans put forward with all these objects in view envisage three phases: first, calling a temporary halt to movements in wage rates; secondly, the revision of the wages structure to bring it into line with current production needs; and thirdly, the provision thereafter of a system of differentials which can vary wage rates according to fluctuations in the demand for particular types of labour.

Much has been written on these proposals since the end of the war, yet the feeling remains in the mind of the reader that, however perfect many of the plans put forward appear on paper, their practical aspects are largely ignored. It is, in the first place, doubtful if wage rates are now of the same paramount importance as they once were. Subject to important qualifications, there is a general tendency, as income from wages rises above the minimum required for reasonable living conditions and nutrition, for the wage-earner to become less interested in merely increasing his wages and more concerned with the other amenities of life—better housing and more agreeable surroundings in so far as these do not depend on wages, convenience of access to shops, amusements and social life, educational facilities for his children, and for himself increased leisure, more agreeable working conditions and the innumerable other things which are not directly related to money. High wages attract, but they do not necessarily overcome the deterrents to certain types of job—dirt, danger or discomfort at work, remoteness or inconvenience in housing, removal to an unfamiliar district or even awkward hours and shift working.

Equally, as was seen only too clearly in the days of depression before the war, even consistently low wages and prolonged unemployment do not always provide a stimulus strong enough to induce the older worker to leave his home or go to the trouble of equipping himself with an entirely new type of technical skill. It is probable that wage differentials would have to be very large before they would have any appreciable influence on mobility between industries, jobs or areas; high or low wage rates on entering industry would perhaps have a greater influence in attracting or deterring juvenile and other new labour, but even this influence can easily be overestimated.

In the second place, central fixing of wage rates implies at least the partial abandonment of collective bargaining; yet this traditional form of negotiation is so much a part of trade unionism—is, in fact, one of its chief reasons for existence—that any proposal for its supersession provokes the fiercest opposition. The overwhelming majority of the movement feels that the traditional method of wage fixing has justified itself in practice over a long period. In its *Interim Report on the Economic Situation* issued at the end of 1947, the T.U.C. was quite explicit on the inadvisability of attempting either to limit wages from outside or to supersede the existing machinery. "In the light of its experience," it wrote, "which in this matter cannot be challenged, the T.U.C. has remained throughout firmly convinced that it is impracticable, and would in any case be undesirable to impose specific limits and restrictions on wage increases. It would be equally unwise and impracticable to establish any external body as an authority capable of determining the movement and adjustment of the wage rates of the millions of wage-earners who, even when circumstances were less favourable to them, have always accepted the full implications and the consequences of voluntary collective bargaining."

Thirdly, even if the trade unions were prepared to accept wage fixing from outside, is it entirely clear what the indirect effects of a differentials policy would be? The preliminary halting of wage movements once carried out, subsequent movements, it is implicit in any policy, must be such as not to outrun the capacity of the community to pay, and if increases in the total wage bill are to be allowed, it must be possible to offset them either by raising the ratio of wages to the total national income or by corresponding increases in output. But would those possibilities exist?

The ratio of wages to national income has been seen above to be remarkably stable, and it is unlikely that it could be raised to any appreciable extent except by deliberate manipulation from the centre—except, that is, by the imposition of strict controls on profits and salaries in order to permit a relative increase in wages. Secondly, the experience of the past suggests that differentials, to be effective, must be very large. It must also be remembered that when wages are raised in order to attract labour, they must be raised for those workers already employed in that particular industry; an increase in a major industry large enough to be effective could thus also be large enough to make a substantial difference to the total national wage bill. If an increase in one case could be balanced by a decrease elsewhere—if, that is, wages could be decreased in cases where the labour force is in excess of the level permitted by the general economic plan—the whole wage bill need not be increased, or only slightly so. But it can hardly be imagined that in their present strong position the trade unions would consent to actual reductions in wage rates. The offer of a higher wage rate in an undermanned industry might indeed lead to a general increase in output not only in that industry, but in others which utilise its products; but the danger must be faced that the increase in output would not keep pace with the overall increase in the wage bill which would be unavoidable if increases were possible and reductions not. In short, the use of differentials large enough to influence

the flow of labour would hardly be possible without a continuous process of monetary expansion which might easily become inflationary. In addition, a further practical difficulty must be faced: the present system by which wage rates fixed by agreement are regarded as minima would have to be superseded by a system establishing both minimum and maximum rates in certain cases—and how difficult it is to prevent the evasion of maxima recent experience in the building industry has shown.

Finally, even if a workable policy could be arrived at and agreed on, who is to implement it? The Government? The T.U.C.? The employers? A specially created joint body of the interested parties? Freedom from governmental control is one of the most cherished privileges of the trade union movement, and though advice may be accepted direction will not be. Neither the T.U.C. nor the employers' organisations could implement a policy alone, since neither would accept the grant of statutory powers to the other. The fourth possibility is nearest to practicability: something on the lines of a national wages board could perhaps be created to represent both sides of industry and the Government. But the creation of such a body would have to be preceded by the most careful thought as to its composition, its powers, and the way in which it is to be used, and it is to be noticed that few of the exponents of a wages plan have given this aspect of the question the serious consideration which it deserves.

Government policy since the end of the war has taken into account some of these considerations, even though it has not apparently been based on a fully formulated plan. Immediately after the war wages were left to find their own level, on the whole without Government interference. In certain cases, however (such as coal-mining and agriculture, where the shortage of labour was acute), the Government encouraged increases in wages not only absolutely, but also relatively to wages in other industries. By means such as this the general wages structure, though not radically overhauled, was at least modified in the light of current requirements.

After this initial phase a halt had to be called to the general upward movement, which showed signs of becoming inflationary. The Government called for voluntary abstention from presenting claims for increased wages, and it was in response to these appeals that the T.U.C. issued at the end of 1947 the *Interim Report on the Economic Situation* referred to above—a report which, while firmly rejecting the fixing of wages by an external authority or on a rigid pattern, advocates acceptance of the Government's appeal for restraint. A month later the Government advanced a further step towards limiting wage increases with the issue of a White Paper on *Personal Incomes, Costs and Prices**, laying down as a principle that wages should not be allowed to rise further except in cases where changes were necessary as incentive measures; increases in other than approved cases could not be reckoned as increased costs for purposes of taxation, price fixing, and similar financial matters; and in addition steps were to be taken to limit profits by enlisting the co-operation of industry generally.

The substance of the White Paper was accepted by a specially summoned conference of trade union executives at the end of March 1948, though with a considerable minority voting against acceptance, and only after the Minister of Labour agreed to withdraw and modify a circular letter which he had sent to wages boards on the interpretation and implementation of the policy set out in the White Paper. Among the opponents of the policy were the engineering unions, which cover an industry with an especially complex wage structure and one in which no significant rise in wages had occurred for two years.

* Cmd. 7321.

It was also noticeable that the conference was followed within a few days by the first important strike for higher wages since the war—and, incidentally, the first large-scale officially recognised strike on any issue for a much longer period.* On the whole, however, the trade union movement accepted the White Paper with the intention of putting it into practice—though also with the intention of keeping a wary eye on any form of increase in profits.

Although the policy so far followed does not conform strictly to any of the more highly developed theoretical plans, it does contain some of their elements, including the halting of upward movements and the possibility of future adjustments in the light of changing requirements. At the time of writing it is too soon to estimate its success. But it would appear that the Government does not intend to resort to any form of machinery outside that which already exists for fixing wages in detail; it prefers to enlist the voluntary co-operation of the unions rather than to impose a pattern of wages on them. The unions do not deny that a degree of rationalisation is still called for, and they will in all probability accept modifications of structure in the future as they have in the past. Similarly, they accept the need for preventing inflation, though they will never accept the view, fashionable as it is in some quarters, that rising wages are the only or even the main cause of inflation. But the fact that even the limited steps so far taken have provoked as much opposition as they have emphasises that the process cannot be hurried.

Still more remains to be done. That the comments made in the preceding pages are mainly destructive does not imply that P E P is unaware of the need for action in this field. In a planned economy wages are a vital factor, and it is unthinkable that they should be left to fix themselves haphazard without any form of guidance from those responsible for the general plan. For wages, even though their actual influence is sometimes overestimated, clearly play a significant part in determining the distribution of labour. The problem for the future is to devise a policy acceptable to both sides of industry and able at the same time to provide the necessary flexibility of structure without allowing wage movements to run counter to other economic needs—and it may be that the trade union movement will find itself compelled by circumstances to modify its attitude at least in some respects. There is a very real risk that unless some form of rational policy can be devised and accepted, recourse will have to be had to other means of securing a proper distribution of labour, with all the danger to personal liberty which that implies. The most careful study and the clearest of thinking is called for if this danger is to be averted.

* This strike of some 22,000 members of the N.U.V.B. began on April 2nd.

II. HOURS AND OVERTIME

After standard rates of wages, the most universal subjects of regulation in collective agreements have been the maximum day or week. Apart from individual industries, such as coal, general legislation on working hours in Great Britain relates only to women and young persons. The first effective measure was the Ten Hours Day Act of 1847, the most recent the Factory Act of 1937. Under the 1937 Act, women's hours were limited to 48 a week and, from July 1939, those of young persons under 16 to 44 a week.

Before 1914 industrial hours averaged 58-54 a week; after 1918 there were extensive reductions, mainly through collective agreements, and the inter-war average tended to be 48. At the end of the second World War very considerable reductions were secured by the unions over a wide range of industries and trades. During 1946, the normal working hours of some 2,100,000 workers were reduced by about $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours a week on the average. Even more substantial reductions were reported during 1947, when the normal hours of a further 5,060,000 workers were reduced by an average of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per week. Commenting on these reductions in their report to the 1947 Congress, the T.U.C. General Council observed that "a very wide section of our economy is now based on normal hours of 44 or 45 per week usually in association with the five-day week." Since the end of the war the use of the five-day week has extended rapidly in the industrial Midlands and Southern England, particularly in the Greater London area where the long journey between the worker's home and the place of work is often an important factor. Many factories still work a 48-hour week in five days, although experience suggests that the system is most successful when hours are limited to 45 or less.

The unions aim at national uniformity in hours as in wages, and this has been attained in a number of industries, including building and engineering. In a great many industries, however, local agreements still predominate. In some, hours are discussed by *ad hoc* conferences, while in others there is no formal machinery of negotiation, but a recognised customary procedure.

Among the unions generally, feelings about overtime are still coloured by the fear of unemployment. Most of the agreements have provisions on overtime, generally on the rates to be paid,* but in some cases also limiting the total hours to be worked. Industries in which the amount of permitted overtime is limited by agreement include engineering, shipbuilding, printing, building and electrical contracting. The national agreement for the engineering industry deprecates systematic overtime as a general principle, but provides that where overtime is necessary "no union workman shall be required to work more than 80 hours overtime in any four weeks after full shop hours have been worked, allowances being made for time lost through sickness, absence without leave or enforced idleness". In the building industry, overtime is restricted to "cases of urgency", although no definite limit is placed on the number of hours that may be worked beyond a proviso that overtime working shall not be continued for more than four consecutive days without the consent of a local joint committee of employers and workpeople. Occasionally, as among porters and packers in general printing shops in London, overtime is only allowed

* For a useful short account of overtime arrangements, together with the details of the rates payable in the main industries, see *Supplement No. 1 to the Industrial Relations Handbook* (H.M.S.O. 1947).

on one night a week. Other agreements, such as that for vehicle building, merely include a clause deprecating overtime working.

The theory of optimum hours

The *laissez-faire* society of the early industrial revolution was naturally opposed to the regulation of hours, and economists supported the arguments of employers. Factories worked 15 hours a day and in one typical case, a model mill near Manchester, children worked 74 hours a week. Robert Owen's experiment at Lanark, where hours were limited to 10 a day, with profit to both employer and workers, did not bear fruit until the end of the 19th century. In the '80's, the Scotia Engine Works at Sunderland found that reducing hours from 54 to 48 meant reduced costs. In 1893 the Salford Iron Works increased production through reducing hours from 54 to 48, with the result that in 1894 all Government factories and workshops were put on a similar basis.

The scientific study of optimum hours was stimulated by the need to increase production during the first World War. The Health of Munitions Workers' Committee was pioneer in the field, and important work was done in the United States at the same period.* It was proved conclusively that if hours were increased above a certain optimum figure, which might vary for different operations, production did not increase but actually decreased. The scientists of the Industrial Health Research Board emphasised these lessons when the country was once more faced with urgent problems of increasing war production. Their warnings were largely unheeded. Hours above the optimum were worked for long periods in many war factories. Even the spurt after Dunkirk only lasted four weeks, production rising by about one quarter in the first week, and dropping steadily from then onwards, until, in the fifth week, output was practically the same as before Dunkirk in spite of the very long hours.

Excessive hours reduce output, both in quantity and quality, and also cause increased absenteeism, for a number of interlocking reasons, both physical and psychological. Physical fatigue and psychological boredom both come into play, with much variation between different workers and between different occupations.

A recent official inquiry in Australia† set out to determine the hours which would produce the highest continuous output, i.e. for 6 months or longer, in different occupations. The results are worth summarising. In no case should juveniles be worked longer

Type of Work	Optimum Hours
Mental work (all types of visual and office work, involving mental exertion or monotony)	40-48
Heavy muscular work	44-45
Work on non-automatic machines, requiring physical exertion.	48
Work on machines requiring constant attention, but little muscular exertion	48-52
Work requiring only intermittent attention and no physical exertion:	
Women	52
Men	56

* U.S. Public Health Service, *Public Health Bulletin* No. 106, Comparison of an Eight-Hour Plant and a Ten-Hour Plant. Report on an investigation by P. S. Florence, Washington 1920. This remains in many respects the most conclusive and exhaustive scientific study of the subject.

† Report of the Industrial Welfare Division of the Australian Department of Labour and National Service, summarised in *The Labour Review*, October 1943, vol. 57, no. 4, p. 792.

than 44 hours, nor women more than 52. Under particularly arduous conditions, shorter hours than those recommended might yield the best results.

The forty-hour week

One of the most important industrial reforms which followed the first World War was the shorter working week, which reduced hours to an average of about 48 per week. But already in 1919 a resolution calling for a legal 44-hour week was carried at the Trades Union Congress. A resolution for a 6-hour day was carried in 1923. Efforts were then concentrated on securing ratification of the Washington Convention, which could be the starting-point for further improvements, e.g. for a 44-hour week, as laid down in the Industrial Workers' Charter in 1924. There the matter rested, since in spite of determined efforts the Convention was not ratified.

The first resolution for a 40-hour week was on the agenda of the 1919 Congress, but it was not until 1931 that a similar resolution was carried. In the same year a joint meeting of the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Labour and Socialist International had remarked that "if the shortening of working hours is to fulfil the purpose of effecting a considerable reduction of the present unemployment, hours of work must be curtailed by at least one full working day. The introduction of the 5-day week (40-hour), which is especially expedient from the point of view of factory management, should therefore be made a fundamental demand of the Trade Unions of all countries."

Fear of unemployment was a leading motive of most advocates of the 40-hour week, the theory being that increased mechanisation would lead to unemployment unless hours were reduced. Most economists in this country would contest such arguments. They would counter them by saying that the aim of industry should be to raise output to a maximum subject only to the over-riding considerations of the welfare and happiness of the community as a whole, including the industrial workers. If output is raised this should lead, under a rational, planned economy, not to unemployment but to a rising standard of living both in this country and in less industrialised countries. To the extent, however, that trade unionists remain unconvinced of the likelihood that full employment can or will be maintained, they will tend to cling to the defensive strategy of reduced hours rather than agree to an all-out offensive towards increased production.

British employers have consistently opposed rigid over-all legislation on hours, preferring to keep the negotiation of hours on a voluntary basis. Trade unions on the other hand prefer legislation. The employers' attitude was a main reason for the non-ratification by Britain of the Washington Convention on Hours in 1919, which recommended the universal adoption of a forty-eight hours week in manufacturing, building, mining and land transport. When the I.L.O. in 1935 drew up a Convention in favour of a 40-hour week, the British view was that the question should be considered industry by industry. By 1936 it was clear that the British Government preferred not to legislate but to leave the matter open for negotiation between unions and employers.

It became clear from the experience of countries which accepted the 40-hour week, including the U.S.A., France, Australia and New Zealand, that hours would have to vary from industry to industry. The I.L.O. Conference in 1935-7 passed Conventions under which the 40-hour week would apply in certain industries such as public works and textiles, and a 42-hour week in glass bottle manufacture. A 42-hour week Convention for automatic sheet glass manufacture was ratified by Great Britain in 1934.

The T.U.C. have adopted a realistic approach to the problem of the 40-hour week and the policy adopted provides for a combination of voluntary and legislative action. They hope for legislation which will adopt the 40-hour week in principle, leaving its detailed application in individual industries to be worked out between the unions and employers. In their report to the 1946 Congress, the General Council visualised the gradual achievement of the 40-hour week over a period of years, due regard being paid to the separate characteristics of the various industries. They pointed out also that in certain cases the reduction to 40 hours a week might appropriately be secured in two stages (e.g. from 48 to 44 and later to 40). Elsewhere it could well be associated with the adoption of double-shift working.

On the scientific evidence it is probable that the 40-hour week would not secure maximum output in most industries at the present level of mechanisation. It may therefore be necessary to weigh the higher material standards which would accrue from working a longer week against the social advantages in health and leisure from working a shorter one. In any case, there is an urgent need of a scientific and thorough investigation of the whole question of hours in relation to both output and general welfare.

III. MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS

Demarcation

Disputes arise between crafts, and between the unions representing them, as to which workman should do a particular job. If one set of workmen receives a lower rate of pay than another, then the latter are likely to object if the former take over their jobs. It is a threat not only to their rate of pay, but to the *raison d'être* of their craft and therefore to their prospects of continued employment. Another, though less important, type of demarcation question arises between different grades or sexes in the same trade.

Demarcation disputes are a frequent cause of strikes and hold up production in other ways. It is to the interest of both men and employers that they should be settled. Demarcation agreements have therefore been concluded in many industries between the different unions affected on the one hand and the employers on the other.

The unions are often criticised because of their rigidity on the question of demarcation rules. When a job urgently needs to be done, and alternative labour is not easily available, such criticism is understandable. Moreover, constant change in materials and technique makes necessary a more frequent revision of the rules than has been obtained in practice. For this reason, certain trades may have survived longer than was justified on functional grounds. But the unions have felt justified, in conditions of mass unemployment and excessively sectional training for entrants to industry, in maintaining their general defensive attitude on demarcation. In this, as in so many current problems, advance depends primarily upon the degree to which trade unionists can be persuaded of the nation's ability to maintain full employment.

Agreements lay down the kind of work which members of different crafts are entitled to undertake. "Demarcation lists" help to avoid disputes, but border-line cases are almost certain to arise, particularly where the same work is done in two industries by different trades. To deal with such cases, standing arrangements for joint discussion are often essential.

In 1912 a National Demarcation Agreement was concluded between the Engineering and Shipbuilding Employers' Federation and 23 trade unions (not including the Boiler-makers' Union, though this is the outstanding craft union in the industry). The agreement related to all major shipbuilding areas, and 'provided for the prompt settlement of demarcation questions, the management being empowered to give a temporary decision on which the work should proceed'. Joint committees, consisting of three employers and three members of each of the unions involved in the dispute, were set up in different areas. None of the representatives may be connected with the shipyard in which the trouble has occurred, and the decisions do not apply nationally. A number of these committees have reached unanimous decisions, and this is a sign of their usefulness.

The National Demarcation Committee of the building industry was less successful and was disbanded. Much strife has been prevented between the plumbers and the heating engineers—two trades between which there is no logical dividing line—by the Reference Committees set up in 1930 and consisting of employers and workers in both trades. The Railway Shopmen's Council has done much to lessen inter-union rivalry.

In the printing industry, modern technical developments have increased the rigidity of demarcation, especially in London, where the unions will not allow a semi-skilled grade. Where uniform wage-rates are established throughout an industry irrespective of the work performed, demarcation troubles tend to disappear, as in the case of the furniture trades.

Inter-union arrangements for dealing with demarcation disputes in particular trades within industries are supplemented by the services of the Disputes Committee of the Trades Union Congress. Upon application from one of the contending parties, the General Council is empowered to investigate cases of disagreement between affiliated unions. It may require the unions concerned to appear before the Disputes Committee and to submit such evidence and information as may enable a decision to be given. Such decisions must be obeyed at the direction of the General Council, to which Congress has delegated very considerable powers of enforcement. In practice these powers have rarely to be invoked, as every effort is made to arrive at agreed and mutually acceptable solutions.

In general, there is less stress on demarcation than in the past, not so much because there is less fear of unemployment, but because there is a growing recognition by the unions that they are on weak ground in resisting the effects of technological advance and defending obsolete methods and trades. The rise of the industrial and general unions, and the increased numbers in the semi-skilled grades, have had a good deal to do with this change.

Apprenticeship

Strict regulation of apprenticeship was a natural corollary of craft unionism in its early form. Where craft unionism is still strong, as in shipbuilding and printing, the regulation of apprenticeship remains an important function of the unions. It also remains of importance in building and wood-working, engineering, pottery, glass and some public utilities. But even in 1926 it only affected one in seven of the young people entering industry, and the proportion is probably now a good deal less.

Regulations cover (i) entry upon apprenticeship, (ii) age at entry, (iii) length of apprenticeship, (iv) the ratio of apprentices to journeymen, i.e. qualified craftsmen, with a view to limiting the number of skilled workers in the trade, (v) the relationship between apprentices and journeymen, and (vi) wages.

In some trades, apprenticeship is the subject of joint agreement. Workers' and employers' representatives jointly administer schemes in the building, printing, electricity supply and some other smaller industries. In the printing industry, the Joint Industrial Council set up local joint committees for "improving, co-ordinating and encouraging the education and training of apprentices". Instruction in the workshop is combined with that in the continuation school, and this is said to have resulted in bringing in a better type of recruit.

A joint scheme for the engineering crafts was agreed upon by the engineering employers and trade unions in the Spring of 1947. Under this scheme general oversight of conditions of recruitment and training is the responsibility of a National Joint Body. At the local level, joint training committees co-operate with the Ministry of Labour's Juvenile Employment Service in the recruitment of suitable boys and youths for entry

into apprenticeship. Local committees are also required to keep in close touch with all firms employing engineering apprentices in order to ensure that the agreed conditions are complied with. Agreement in principle on a broadly similar plan for the shipbuilding industry was reported in May 1947.

Trade Boards and J.I.C.s often concern themselves with recruitment. Thus among the more specific objects of the J.I.C. for flour-milling is the consideration of methods of training for young people entering the industry, and the provision of educational facilities for them, in co-operation with the education authorities.

The main ground of contention between workers and employers is the ratio of apprentices to journeymen. Unions argue that the limit is necessary to ensure proper training and maintain the level of craft skill. The question has not arisen in the pottery trade, but appears in most of the other rules. In printing the proportion is so varied between the small and the large firm that the burden of the system, which in any case falls heaviest on the small firm, is made heavier still.

The official inquiry in 1926 showed that less than one-quarter of the employers in industries where apprenticeship occurs actually trained apprentices. The proportion was highest in shipbuilding. Since then the regulation of apprenticeship has continued to decline in importance as a purely trade union issue, but questions of training in industry generally, and of technical education, are increasingly present in the minds of employers and unions alike. Under the Education Act 1944 part-time education up to 18 years of age will become compulsory. Much of this will be technical (though not trade) education. Employers, unions, and local education authorities have a great deal of work to do in adapting schemes of apprenticeship and further education to the new conditions which lie ahead.

Holidays with pay

A full account of the recent position with regard to holidays with pay will be found in the *Industrial Relations Handbook* and the *Supplement* Sheets (No. 1) issued in May 1947, to which reference has been made earlier in the present study.

The Amulree Committee estimated in 1938 that of $18\frac{1}{2}$ million employed, some $7\frac{3}{4}$ millions, or a little more than 40 per cent, had holidays with pay in some form under voluntary arrangements and collective agreements. The Holidays with Pay Act, 1938, empowered all statutory wage authorities to direct the provision of holidays with pay in their respective industries. During and since the war payment for holidays became the general rule throughout the whole field of industry and commerce. According to Ministry of Labour estimates, between 11 and 12 million wage-earners are now covered by collective agreements or statutory orders providing for holidays with pay. When account is taken of the large numbers of professional and salaried workers to whom paid holidays are ensured by other arrangements, the grand total is probably in the region of 15 million. In less than ten years, therefore, the number of people taking paid holidays has been almost doubled and this—as indicated by the experience of the first two post-war summers—has led to a correspondingly heavier demand for holiday services and facilities of all kinds.

THE GENERAL STAFF OF LABOUR

I. THE EVOLUTION OF A CENTRAL TRADE UNION POLICY

At the present time, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress is the Cabinet of organised labour in this country. In no other country is there a parallel body with equal influence. But this influence has only been obtained by degrees. Even today, when its moral influence is very great, the T.U.C.'s constitutional powers are narrow and the separate trade unions are to a large extent autonomous.

The separate unions grew up as independent, uncoordinated groupings of labour. In the nineteenth century there was little unity between them. They fought each other and competed on sectional grounds. There are astonishing differences between them in scope, policy and constitution. The older craft unions and the "new unionism" of the '80's were based on quite different conceptions of trade union function. The craft unions were concerned with maintaining the status of their craft, with relatively high wages and a limited number of apprentices. The new unions based their power on numbers, and sought to secure a minimum wage for the unskilled worker.

As their strength grew, and their place in national society began to win recognition, the common aspirations behind each union and each member, and the common problems which each faced, began to have their effect. Under the chisel of economic and social pressure the rough lineaments of a national trade union attitude emerged. "Trade Unionism", despite the continuing conflicts among the unions, began to stand for the whole social attitude of Labour in the face of Capital.

The war of 1914-18 brought the trade unions finally into the open field of national administration. Their cooperation was recognised as essential then as in the war of 1939-45. A trade union leader entered the War Cabinet; national negotiations recognised the T.U. movement, not as a dangerous potential enemy of law and order, but as a force and an institution which had become integral to a society admittedly living on a balance of social and economic power. Thus by 1918 the trade unions had, to all appearance, a very powerful position. Their numbers greatly increased and in the first flush of reconstruction it was assumed that labour would take its place as a partner in the industrial structure.

From 1917 to 1921 was a period of amalgamations and federations of unions previously separate. Some Federations were much older; the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, for example, was founded in 1888. But after 1917 amalgamations came thick and fast—e.g. Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (1917), Amalgamated Engineering Union (1920), Union of Post Office Workers (1920), Amalgamated Union of Building Trades Workers (1921), Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (1921), National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (1921), Transport and General Workers' Union (1921) and National Union of General and Municipal Workers (1921). At this period therefore, many of the most important labour groupings took on their present shape and scale. Other combinations were to follow in the interval between the wars.

The Trades Union Congress

This marshalling of forces made it a logical next step to strengthen the Trades Union Congress, as the organ for deciding a central, unified policy. The Trades Union Congress had been founded in 1868. It represented, in those early days, an annual demonstration of trade union strength, an expression of solidarity, and an opportunity for leaders of the movement to discuss their problems. But without executive machinery or authority to decide policy, it remained at most demonstrative and consultative. The Congress is still a meeting of delegates from the separate unions.

Affiliated unions pay 4d. a member a year to Congress plus a small additional levy for the World Federation of Trades Unions. Unions applying for affiliation are required to submit copies of their rules together with evidence of their *bona fides* as independent associations for the furtherance of workpeoples' interests. In recent years, quite as many unions have been refused affiliation as have been accepted.* Once affiliated, unions rarely withdraw. The Civil Service unions were, of course, compelled to sever their connection by the Trade Disputes Act of 1927, but resumed their affiliations immediately following the repeal of the Act in 1946. In some cases separate unions with similar or associated memberships affiliate as a group and not individually. The Amalgamated Weavers' Association and the National Federation of Insurance Workers provide examples of this form of affiliation.

Up to 1921 the only provision for continuity in between Congresses was the Parliamentary Committee, consisting of 18 members and a secretary, whose main function was lobbying and going on deputations. A proposal for a General Council was first put forward at a Special Congress in December 1919, which had been called mainly on account of the crisis over the nationalisation of the coal mines. It was not until 1921, however, that the first General Council was elected. It had 32 members, representing 17 industrial groups, and also a secretary and assistant secretary as whole-time officials.

Between 1921 and 1926, attempts were made to strengthen and define the powers of the General Council. The Congress of 1922 discussed an addition to General Council Standing Order No. 12, which would enable the General Council to coordinate the organisation of strike action in important disputes. Mr. Clynes pointed out that this would in practice conflict with the considerable powers held by the great groupings—the General Workers, Engineers, Shipbuilders and Textile Workers. Moreover, to quote Professor Marquand, “the older craft unions were reluctant to be drawn into disputes originated by the more militant industrial or general unions. . . . They had no desire to imperil their funds, and still less to surrender craft privileges. The newer unions feared to impair their own sovereignty.”† This difficulty is a common one in federal bodies. The unions had twin and partly contradictory desires; they wanted, on the one hand, a stronger central organisation for use in relations with employers and the State, but were not prepared, on the other hand, to sacrifice any of their own separate autonomies.

By 1924, T.U. membership had fallen heavily and the gilt was off the post-war gingerbread. In the same year Walter Citrine first appears as assistant General Secretary (Fred Bramley being General Secretary) to the General Council. There is visible in the layout of that year's Report to Congress by the General Council the hand of someone

* The General Council's report for 1947 shows six applications as having been made in the course of the year; of these, only three were accepted.

† *Organised Labour in Four Continents* (Longmans, 1939), page 188.

with a comprehensive grasp of the T.U. situation—perhaps Citrine himself. To quote the Report:

“The tendency towards centralisation which has been so strongly manifested in recent years cannot be without its effect upon the Trades Union Congress. The need is continually felt for some central body able to speak and act authoritatively on behalf of the whole British Trade Union movement. The Trades Union Congress is pre-eminently the body which could assume that function. The problem to be solved is how to make the T.U.C. not merely an effective expression of industrial activity but an efficient executive instrument to translate these expressions into practical realisation.”

It was at the 1924 Congress at Hull that an “Industrial Charter” was adopted, which in 1928 became Standing Order No. 2, and a statement of the objects of the T.U.C. These include the public ownership and control of natural resources and of services, among them the land, mines, minerals and railways, the extension of State and municipal enterprise for the provision of social necessities and services, and provision for the adequate participation of the workers in the control and management of public services and industries.

The General Strike of 1926 was to disillusion those hopes and to underline the insufficient integration of the movement by comparison with its ambitious objects. To attain the integration and thence eventually the objects, a long-term strategy was needed. In 1938, Sir Walter Citrine, after 12 years as secretary to the General Council, wrote in *Seventy Years of Trade Unionism* (page 21):

“The creation of the General Council was, of itself, something far more than a mere organisational change. It was the consummation, in part at least, of a growing desire within the Movement for a higher degree of centralisation of trade union effort. It was a response to the demand for a greater concentration of forces and of leadership, and although this in the nature of things has only been partially realised, the trend is unmistakeable. . . . Gradually the trade unions are learning the lesson which the National Strike taught just as did the Great War, namely, the necessity for unity of command.”

Trade Unionists, he wrote, were still under misapprehensions as to the actual extent of the powers of the General Council, which were in fact limited by the autonomy of the unions. Centralism must come of itself gradually:

“Any attempt by the General Council to usurp an authority which has not been freely conceded would be fatal to the continuance of the trend which is steadily developing to make the General Council a really effective general staff for Trade Unionism.”

Citrine foresaw a trade union movement not only centralised but trained and educated for the realisation of its basic objects:

“As the Trade Union Movement acquires still greater influence, so will its officers become more highly trained and specialised, not only in the conduct of negotiation on wages and working conditions but in the problems of industrial management and the actual conduct of industry itself. Gradually the Trade Union Movement is embracing within itself the technicians, administrative and supervisory workers, as well as the craftsmen and manual labourers. Sooner or later, the democratic control of industries will come within the realm of practicability.”

On such a perspective, one can appreciate the long-term nature of Citrine's policy and his often-repeated use of such words as "gradually", "sooner or later". It would be a mistake to deduce from this time-scale any abandonment of the ultimate aims stated in Standing Order No. 2 in favour of a mere opportunism or entrenchment behind the wage-bargaining function. As centralised power increases, so the question of participation in management becomes more actual. In the long run, it is a more important aspect of trade union aspiration than the defence of the wages level. With Citrine as secretary, Trades Union Congresses were to work out in more detail what kind of share in management they could expect. The concentration of ownership and control among a few industrialists, and the existence or organised employers' associations and federations, suggested that the trade unions, if they were patient, would be in a strong position to claim their share of control. The failure of the General Strike discouraged the idea of a frontal attack, a direct threat to these corporate interests. Instead, from 1927 onwards, the General Council favoured a policy of consultation with the employers, not only on wage matters in different industries, but on matters affecting industry as a whole.

The alternatives before the movement in the period immediately following the General Strike were defined by the General Council in their report to the Swansea Congress of 1928.

The first was for the unions to say frankly that they would do everything possible to bring the industrial machine to a standstill in the hope of creating a revolutionary situation which would lead to the overthrow of capitalism. The second was one of standing aside and telling the employers to get on with their own jobs while the unions pursued a policy of fighting for improvements on a sectional basis. The first of these was dismissed by the General Council as "futile, certain to fail, and sure to lead to bloodshed and misery", while the second was characterised as "entirely inconsistent with the modern demand for a completely altered status of the workers in industry".

The third course—which the General Council commended—was for the trade union movement to say boldly that not only was it concerned with the prosperity of industry but determined to have a voice in the way it was carried on. The unions, it was argued, could find more use for an efficient industry than a derelict one. For this reason, they should use their power to promote and guide the "scientific reorganisation of industry".

By their advocacy of this policy and by embarking upon conversations with the Mond Group of Industrialists,* the General Council exposed themselves to the charge of wishing to collaborate with the employers at the expense of the workers they were chosen to represent. The A.E.U. in particular expressed strong opposition to the conciliatory approach, while the Communist elements, although denying that it was their intention, attempted to form a rival T.U.C. which they called the Minority Movement. This it remained and the great majority of unions backed the General Council.† Whatever the actual results of the General Council's policy at the time, twenty years later it can be seen as part of the total strategy of the T.U.C. and of Citrine in particular.

The General Council today

The General Council is now composed of 34 members, all of whom, with the exception of the General Secretary, are elected annually at Congress. The method of election used

* See section on Relations with Employers' Organisations below.

† At the 1928 Congress, an A.E.U. amendment deprecating the Mond-T.U.C. conversations was rejected by 2,921,000 votes to 768,000.

has been designed to ensure on the one hand, that the General Council should be representative of Congress as a whole, and, on the other, that each industry should be sure of a voice. Simple nomination and ballot vote might have led to some industries or groups, with well known or "popular" nominees, getting a disproportionate number of seats. Unions are therefore divided into 18 Trade Groups (mining, non-manual, engineering, etc.) and seats on the Council are allotted to each group roughly in proportion to membership. Only unions within each group may nominate for the seats to which the group is entitled, but all the delegations at Congress vote for all the seats. In addition to the Trade Group representatives, provision is made for the election of two women, and all unions with women members may nominate candidates for these seats.

Members of the General Council are by no means always from the biggest unions, nor do unions always nominate their General Secretaries. The T. & G.W.U. has often been criticised for its so-called "bureaucratic tendencies", but it is interesting to observe that it is the only union which regularly nominates a rank and file or "lay" member for election to the General Council. In 1946-7, of the 31 members elected from the 18 Trade Groups, only three unions had more than one representative, two having two each* and one having three†; 16 of the seats were filled by representatives of unions each with less than 100,000 members, five of them in fact having less than 40,000 members.

The work of the General Council

For fifty-one weeks in the year, the General Council acts as the T.U.C. Its actions can be repudiated by Congress but seldom are because it proceeds cautiously, always seeking the views of the unions most concerned with the questions upon which it is called upon to act or make decisions. Its prestige is very considerable, but except under Standing Order 12, relating to inter-union disputes, it has no power to order. It leads and steers but may not command. Speaking for the movement on general issues, it interprets Congress policy, but leaves the application of policy to individual unions.

The primary industrial functions of the General Council are summarised in Standing Order No. 8. The duties here laid down are:

- (a) to transact the business between Congresses, keep watch on industrial movements and co-ordinate industrial action,
- (b) to watch and, if directed, to initiate labour legislation,
- (c) to adjust disputes between unions,
- (d) to promote common action, e.g. on wages and hours of labour,
- (e) to assist in organisation and propaganda,
- (f) to maintain relations with international labour,
- (g) to take test cases to the House of Lords and to meet the expense by a levy on the Unions,
- (h) to call an anti-war Congress in certain circumstances,
- (i) to call a special Congress in other emergencies,
- (j) to prepare a report on its work for the Annual Congress.

The practical effects of these provisions is best seen by looking at the Annual Reports describing the work of the General Council. We may note that action under (d) has not been taken directly, whatever moral or indirect influences may be exerted. Neither have circumstances led to the calling of an anti-war Congress under (h) or an emergency

* T. & G.W.U. and N.U.M.

† N.U.G.M.W.

Congress under (i), although special conferences of National Executives have been held, as for example in May 1939 to discuss the steps to be taken in the event of war, in May 1940 to discuss the Coalition Government's proposals for total mobilisation, in March 1946 to discuss the economic situation with the members of the Government, and in March 1948 to discuss the newly announced policy of the Government on personal incomes, prices and profits.

The Annual Reports show that a great deal of the work of the General Council consists in bringing trade union views to the notice of Government departments by deputations, consultative committees and correspondence. Internally, there is the work of arbitrating on inter-union disputes, and promoting conferences between similar unions with a view to their unification. To undertake these activities, specialised knowledge and research are needed. Congress repeatedly asks the General Council to investigate some problem and make a report on it. At T.U.C. Headquarters, whole time permanent officials are in charge of special departments covering organisation, international problems, wages councils, education, research and economic matters, social insurance, press and publicity, and trades councils. In addition, there are a number of specialised committees, some composed of representatives of the General Council only, others including direct representatives of the unions or other bodies, ranging from the National Association of Local Government Officers to the Soviet Trade Unions.

The Annual Congress

The General Council's Annual Report to Congress goes through the year's work under a series of headings such as Organisation, Safety and Welfare, Trade Unions and the Post-War Period (covering general labour and production questions), Research and Economic, Education, Wages Councils, Disputes between Unions, etc. The Report in itself forms the basis of the discussion and debate at Congress. It is gone through seriatim, almost paragraph by paragraph. Resolutions from the unions and emergency resolutions and statements from the General Council form the general framework of the discussion on the Report. About thirty resolutions come up for discussion at an Annual Congress, many of them being composite versions of a number of resolutions from different unions. The agenda of Congress is worked out by a General Purposes Committee, and the Chairman of the General Council (who holds office for a single year) acts as its President and has, of course, an important role in directing the course of debate. The scope of Congress discussion may perhaps best be indicated by an analysis of resolutions in four years (1932-5) when the General Council under Citrine had begun to develop the lines of policy outlined earlier, and before the clouds of approaching war had so gathered as to overshadow the strategy of industrial evolution. Taking all the resolutions of these four years and arranging them under broad headings, we find that out of a total of 129 resolutions, 71 called on the General Council to press the Government for various sorts of legislation, 12 dealt with internal matters of organisation and solidarity, 10 called for investigation into and report on e.g. nationalisation, the Bedaux system, etc., 10 registered the worries of trade unionists about unfair competition of labour, e.g. by aliens or women, 8 were concerned with policy on the 40-hour week, 5 dealt with Congress business. The remaining 13 expressed political convictions, e.g. anti-fascism, socialist aspiration, etc., or recalled, for example, the story of the Tolpuddle martyrs.

The 71 resolutions calling for legislation therefore dominate the agenda. This is some measure of the utility of the General Council for the unions. To the Council they delegate the job of maintaining and extending the rights of industrial workers through

Government machinery. Congress itself, of course, has a much wider function, as an occasion for the ventilation of viewpoints, aspirations, differences, difficulties, perplexities.

Looking in detail at the 71 resolutions, we find that 26 press for legislation on industrial conditions, e.g. amendments to Factory Acts; 17 deal with unemployment (reflecting the slump then in full swing); 9 with health; 4 with housing; 4 with workmen's compensation; 3 with the Trade Disputes Act; others with the welfare of the blind and international questions. It is difficult to gauge precisely the effect of these resolutions, since it is largely indirect, but the existence of a strong T.U.C. must undoubtedly increase the degree of social pressure towards reform.

Amalgamation policy and the T.U.C.

The strengthening of the internal structure of the trade union movement is a slow but continuous process. As we saw, there was a great consolidation at the end of the first World War. In 1918, the T.U.C. appointed a committee to look into amalgamation questions. This followed a change in the legal position. By an Act of 1876, if a union wanted to amalgamate with another it had to get two-thirds of its total membership to agree by ballot. In 1917, a new Act made it possible for unions to amalgamate if 30 per cent of their members recorded votes in favour, as long as 50 per cent of the members voted. The previous Act had made amalgamations practically impossible where unions of any strength were concerned.

A by-product of the inter-war trend towards consolidation and the rise of industrial and general unions was a big increase, especially during the years 1924-27, in the number of disputes between unions which the General Council was called upon to arbitrate. One union would frequently accuse another of poaching members. In the peak year 1924 the General Council's report commented that the disputes were largely due to three different conceptions of union organisation—craft, industrial and general. The relative advantages and disadvantages of each of these conceptions were brought to the forefront of discussion when the 1924 Congress meeting at Hull adopted the following resolution, moved by a delegate from the Miners' Federation:

"This Congress declares:

- (a) That the time has arrived when the number of trade unions should be reduced to an absolute minimum.
- (b) That the aim should be as far as possible organisation by industry, with every worker a member of the appropriate organisation.
- (c) That it is essential that a united front be formed for improving the standards of the workers.
- (d) And accordingly instructs the General Council to draw up
 - (1) A scheme for organisation by industry, and
 - (2) A scheme which may secure unity of action, without the definite merging of existing unions, by a scientific linking up of same to present a united front."

The enquiry which followed the passing of this resolution took three years to complete. Evidence, written and oral, was taken from a large number of affiliated organisations. A memorandum on the implications of the resolution, prepared by Walter Citrine, was included in the General Council's report for 1925. This memorandum, which was accepted by Congress, noted that "any attempt at a regimentation of unions in accordance

with a preconceived plan of organisation would inevitably lead to the splitting up of Congress into fragmentary sections. The united front called for by the Hull resolution would consequently become an impossibility." It went on to point out that the structure of trade unionism was dictated by its objects. These objects, previously confined to (a) the improvement of wages and working conditions, would in future have to include (b) control of industry, and (c) "scientific functioning against capitalism". The defects of existing trade union structure and method were listed as (a) sectionalism, (b) competition for membership, (c) varied rates of contributions and benefits, (d) demarcation of work (i.e. among craft unions), and (e) a lack of co-ordinated policy.

The theory and practice of the various forms of trade unionism were analysed in turn:

- (a) Class or general unionism, under which all workers would be enrolled in one big union representing the working class as a whole. Although theoretically perfect, this conception could not be regarded as a practical possibility at that time.
- (b) Industrial unionism (e.g. one union for all workers in the coal industry and another for all railway workers, and so on). Here it was argued that, apart from the difficulty of defining industries, the bitterness and strife which would be aroused by any attempt on the part of the General Council to impose any particular form of organisation on the unions might well destroy all hope of a united front. Industrial unionism could only be practicable where control of an industry had become highly centralised, with its principal negotiations conducted through one organisation. Only a small number of industries had approached this stage of development, industrial unionism had to be regarded as being impossible of early application.
- (c) Occupational unionism. This form was said to differ from industrial unionism "in the sense that its divisions traverse horizontally the field of workers and not vertically as in the case of industrial unionism. Instead of promoting a united front this form would far more aggravate the existing differences."
- (d) Federation and confederation were regarded as the most practicable methods of meeting the demands of the Hull resolution. These methods provided the easiest line of approach to any scheme of organisation which the General Council might attempt. The close federation of trade unions on industrial lines, with suitable provisions against secessions, was considered more practicable than any extravagant theoretical plan involving the dismemberment of certain affiliated unions.
- (e) Craft unionism, under which workers are organised in accordance with their own identity, irrespective of occupation or industry, was shown by the memorandum to be incompatible, on its narrowest forms, with the purposes of the Hull resolution. While there was a tendency among certain craft unions to open their ranks to semi-skilled and unskilled workers, the majority of such unions were still composed exclusively of craftsmen.

The final report of the enquiry arising from the Hull resolution, presented to the 1927 Congress, included the results of further investigation and emphasised that "the varying structure and method of working of unions, the differing circumstances in the various trades and industries, and the impossibility of defining boundaries make the general application of any particular scheme impracticable". The report also included a summary of the efforts which had been made to promote the greater unity of the move-

ment by the encouragement of amalgamations and the formation of federations in a number of industries. These efforts had met with but limited success and the main obstacles in the way of amalgamation were listed as:

- (a) Fear of loss of trade identity and autonomy, especially on the part of small unions.
- (b) Marked differences in scales of contribution and benefits.
- (c) The disinclination of unions to reduce their assets per member, i.e. to pool resources with a union in a weak financial position.
- (d) Difficulty in finding positions for officials of amalgamating unions.

Nevertheless, the General Council was of the opinion that greater co-ordination in the forces of the movement was essential and that, in spite of the difficulties noted, amalgamation offered the most effective way whereby such co-ordination could be achieved. Each affiliated union was asked to indicate whether and how far it was (1) prepared to take part in amalgamation negotiations, (2) prepared to agree to joint working arrangements with other unions, and (3) to indicate with which unions lay the greatest possibility of progress being made in negotiations on either or both (1) and (2). The replies of the unions were summarised in the General Council's report for 1928. Amalgamation was favoured for example by the National Union of Railwaymen, but the other two railway unions, the Railway Clerks' Association and the craft-minded Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen expressed opposition. On the whole, the big unions who would have swallowed the little unions wanted amalgamation, but the little unions were not so unanimous.

During the thirties, the General Council encouraged the formation of advisory councils and committees to facilitate consultation between related unions. Among the more successful of these joint bodies have been the National Women's Advisory Council, consisting of representatives of the General Council and of unions concerned with the organisation of women; the Non-Manual Workers' Advisory Council, representative of the General Council and of 42 unions, and including a representative of the National Federation of Professional Workers; the National Advisory Council of the Nursing Profession, which includes three members of the General Council and representatives of six unions; the Local Government Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of the General Council and those of the affiliated unions catering for local authority employees, together with representatives of the non-affiliated National Association of Local Government Officers.

At the Southport Congress of 1943, the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers successfully moved the following resolution:

"Congress, having in mind the still wider functions and responsibilities of the Trade Union Movement in the post-war period, calls upon the General Council to take immediate steps to examine Trade Union structure and to report subsequently with special regard to:

- (a) Uneconomic overlapping and competition;
- (b) What amalgamations are desirable;
- (c) Structural and other changes necessary to ensure maximum trade union efficiency in the future."

The enquiry based on this resolution embraced a review of previous attempts at co-ordination, including the developments following the Hull resolution and the 1927

report. In addition, a questionnaire was circulated to affiliated unions, asking for information on relevant points. Conferences were held of representatives of 33 unions covering 30 different industries. An interim report on the problems raised by the inquiry was presented to the 1944 Congress, and a supplementary report on the results of the conferences called by the General Council was issued in 1945. The final report,* approved by the 1946 Congress, was issued in a definitive text, embracing the 1944 and 1945 reports, in March 1947.

This report is of particular value to students of the trade union movement in that it includes a considerable amount of historical detail which cannot be found elsewhere, together with a discussion of trade union functions including those of the T.U.C. While no immediate or basic alteration of trade union structure is proposed in the report it is asserted that "the Trade Union Movement in a changing world cannot retain its pre-war conception of organisation if it is to prosper and efficiently fulfil its ideological and practical functions." The unions themselves, it is argued, must strive for closer unity and probably make sacrifices to achieve it. The report reiterates the 1927 conclusion that the attainment of co-ordination can best be achieved by the amalgamation of unions with closely related trade interests. Where, however, complete amalgamation is not yet practicable, the General Council suggest, as an intermediate objective, a highly developed form of federation, closely linked with Congress machinery. Under this form of organisation, the separate unions would retain full control over administrative functions in the sense of general protection of members, payment of benefits and the provision of legal and educational services. Responsibility for recruitment of new members and for "economic" functions, including collective bargaining and the formulation of policy, would rest with the federations.

In order to facilitate the development of this federal form of organisation, the unions are urged to follow the principles of good trade union practice known as the "Bridlington (1939) proposals". These include a willingness to enter into joint working arrangements with other unions in regard to (1) determination of spheres of influence, (2) mutual recognition of cards as an aid to the elimination of inter-union competition, (3) machinery for composing differences, and (4) conditions for transference of membership. The proposals also lay down that no member of another union should be accepted into membership without consultation with that union, and that membership should be refused to any member of another union who is "under discipline", engaged in a trade dispute, or in arrears with contributions. Moreover, no union should begin recruiting activities at any undertaking in respect of any grades or groups of workers, among whom another union has a majority, except by arrangement with that union.†

* *Trade Union Structure and Closer Unity—Final Report (T.U.C.).*

† The coal industry provides a recent instance of the successful application of the Bridlington proposals. When the National Coal Board took over, at least ten unions claimed organisational rights at the colliery level. These were: (1) National Union of Mineworkers, (2) National Federation of Colliery Officials and Staffs, (3) Blastfurnacemen and Ore Miners, (4) A.E.U., (5) Electrical Trades Union, (6) Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, (7) Transport and General Workers' Union, (8) National Union of General and Municipal Workers, (9) Civil Service Clerical Association, (10) Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union.

Following inter-union discussions and negotiations, the Federation of Colliery Staffs amalgamated with the N.U.M., to which union also the Blastfurnacemen and Ore Miners agreed to transfer those of their members employed at collieries. The A.E.U., the E.T.U. and the Building Trade Workers signed agreements whereby, on payment of a capitation fee, their members in the mining industry became members of the N.U.M. also. Similarly, the General and Municipal Workers agreed to suspend recruiting activities at collieries and to affiliate existing members to the N.U.M. Both the Transport and General Workers and the C.S.C.A. withdrew their claims so that trade union activity at colliery level is now confined to two organisations only—the N.U.M. and the C.A.W.U.

To encourage the closest possible relations between the federations and the T.U.C. the report recommends that the machinery of Congress should be developed to provide (a) for the extension of the advisory committee system to cover each industry or related group, (b) for the federal body in each industry or group to be associated with an advisory committee, along with representatives of the General Council, (c) for additional research facilities to cover general research for all industries, with the whole of these and other facilities of Congress being placed at the disposal of the federations, and (d) for the extension of educational facilities.

Finally, the report outlines the progress made with schemes of amalgamation, federation and joint working among unions concerned with more than 30 different industries. The more important advances noted include the amalgamation, in January 1945, of some 20 autonomous unions, based mainly on the various coalfields, to form the National Union of Mineworkers, and the amalgamation of the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers with the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks to form, as from 1st January 1947, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers. Amalgamation discussions were also reported to be taking place in the furnishing and hosiery industries while joint-working arrangements in the engineering industry had been strengthened by the affiliation of the Amalgamated Engineering Union to the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

Trades Councils and the T.U.C.

Most of the regular business of the T.U.C. has, of necessity, to be conducted from its London headquarters. Lacking local organisation and staff, it uses the offices and machinery of Trades Councils as a channel for the exchange of information and ideas with rank and file trade unionists in the localities. These Councils—many of them older than the T.U.C. itself—act as co-ordinating agencies of the work of branches of different unions in a single town or locality. It was at the invitation of a Trades Council that the first Trades Union Congress was convened in 1868. For many years Trades Councils were directly affiliated and represented at Congress, as indeed they still are at the Scottish T.U.C. In 1947, there were approximately 500 Councils in England and Wales, grouped together into 23 federations, each based on a county or a group of counties.

Although only "recognised" by, and not affiliated to, the T.U.C., Trades Councils occupy an important place in Congress machinery. Apart from the National Executives of affiliated unions, they are the only trade union bodies which enjoy the right of a direct approach to the General Council. The relations of the T.U.C. with the Councils are conducted through a special Trades Councils' Department and through a Trades Councils' Joint Consultative Committee, established in 1924.

Congress provides the Councils with a wide range of specialist services including advice and guidance on matters of policy, the supply of propaganda material and equipment for local membership campaigns, and the organisation of conferences and educational activities. In return, Trades Councils are expected to act as local correspondents for the General Council, forwarding such reports of local trade union activity as are of interest or value, and to act as circulating agencies for all statements and publications issued by the T.U.C.

II. THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The external relations of the British trade union movement may be conveniently considered under four headings—those with the Labour Party, those with employers, those with the Government, and, lastly, those with international organisations and with trade unions in other countries.

RELATIONS WITH THE LABOUR PARTY

The original aims of the nineteenth century unions were workshop aims. Faced, however, with the hostility of employers politically as well as industrially, and coming up against unfavourable decisions in the Courts affecting both their legal status and everyday practices, they were compelled to go outside the workshops, not merely to win legal recognition but also to safeguard workshop gains. They were, in short, compelled to go into politics.

The political activities of the nineteenth century unions have been adequately described elsewhere and need not detain us here. Suffice it to note that, although the first two working men's representatives were elected to Parliament in 1874, the formal alliance between the trade union movement and a political party of "Labour" dates only from 1899. The Trades Union Congress of that year resolved by 546,000 votes to 434,000 that a special congress of co-operative, socialist and trade union organisations be called to devise ways and means "for securing the return of an increased number of Labour Members to the next Parliament." The special Congress thus called in February 1900 founded the Labour Representation Committee which in 1906 became known as the Labour Party.

For nearly half a century, the unions have provided the Labour Party with the bulk of its membership and by far the larger proportion of its central funds. In 1946, out of a total membership of 3,332,358, the affiliated trade unions accounted for 2,635,346. Out of a total of £66,450 paid in 1936, no less than £50,632 came from the unions.

The structural relations between the two wings of the British Labour Movement are twofold. There are, on the one hand, the links between the Labour Party and individual unions, and on the other, those between the Party and the Trades Union Congress.

Taking first the relations between the Party and individual unions, it is important to note that only a minority both of the number of unions and the membership affiliated to the T.U.C. are also affiliated to the Labour Party. Affiliation statistics issued by the two organisations for the year 1946 provide the following comparison:

	No. of Unions Affiliated	Trade Union Membership Affiliated
Trades Union Congress . . .	187	7,540,397
The Labour Party . . .	71	2,635,346

Prominent among the 116 T.U.C. unions not affiliated to the Labour Party are the Civil Service unions, and such organisations of non-manual and professional workers as the National Union of Bank Employees, the Guild of Insurance Officials, the National Union of Journalists, the National Union of Operative Heating and Domestic Engineers, and the unions of tobacco and hosiery workers.

Within the unions affiliated to the Party, the proportion of members paying the political levy varies considerably as between one union and another. Following are the proportions for the twenty-five largest unions affiliated to the Labour Party in 1946:

Union	Percentage of total membership affiliated to the Labour Party 1946
Railway Clerks' Association	85
National Union of Mineworkers	77
National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants	76
United Textile Factory Workers' Association*	69
National Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers	67
National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives	62
National Union of Agricultural Workers	57
National Union of Railwaymen	53
National Society of Pottery Workers	51
National Union of Vehicle Builders	44
British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association†	43
Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers	42
Association of Shipbuilding and Engineering Draughtsmen	39
National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers	39
Transport and General Workers' Union	37
Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen	36
Amalgamated Engineering Union	33
Typographical Association	33
United Society of Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders	31
National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers	31
National Union of General and Municipal Workers	30
Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers	22
National Union of Public Employees	17
Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers	17
Electrical Trades Union	15

It is important to note that the percentages shown only relate to affiliations at the national level and that, in addition, local branches of unions also affiliate to local and constituency Labour Parties. In the larger towns and cities, embracing a number of constituencies, the Labour Party's organisational structure provides for City, Borough or Central Labour Parties, and trade union branches affiliate to these also. In some towns, the functions of a constituency or Borough Labour Party and those of a Trades Council are performed by a single Trades and Labour Council. A recent development within the Labour Party has been the creation of Regional Councils of Labour to provide an intermediate link between the National Executive Committee and affiliated bodies including constituency parties and trade unions, the latter being usually represented by nominees of their District or Area Committees or Councils. A politically affiliated trade

* The United Textile Factory Workers' Association comprises seven major cotton unions some of which are themselves federations or amalgamations of a large number of localised unions.

† Equivalent of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation.

unionist may thus bring his influence to bear on the Labour Party's policies at three, and sometimes four, levels from the local or constituency Party to the annual Party Conference.

At the Labour Party's annual conference, affiliated organisations, including trade unions, may be represented by one delegate for each 5,000 members or part thereof on whom affiliation dues were paid for the year ending 31st December preceding the Conference. Voting rights provide for one voting card for each 1,000 members or part thereof on whom affiliations were paid for the preceding year. Thus at the 1947 Conference, 59 unions (out of a possible 71) were represented by 419 delegates with a voting power of 2,670,000, of which 1,798,000 (representing 67 per cent of the trade union total and 49 per cent of the conference total of 3,631,000) were in the hands of the representatives of the six biggest unions, namely the National Union of Mineworkers, the Transport & General Workers, the General and Municipal Workers, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, the National Union of Railwaymen and the Amalgamated Engineering Union. In contrast 590 representatives of 572 constituency parties and federations of parties commanded only 895,000 votes.

Before the war, the dominance of the unions was a source of bitter complaint among the "political" wing of the Party. Especially vocal were the "leftist" elements who often found themselves overwhelmed by the trade union "blocks". There were frequent references to the "reactionary" and "undemocratic" character of the card vote. But it is difficult to see how any alternative voting system with little or no weight given to membership would have been any more democratic.

Not the least important function of the Annual Conference is that of electing the Party's National Executive Committee for the ensuing year. The Executive has a membership of twenty-seven, of whom twelve are nominated by affiliated trade unions and elected by them, seven are nominated by constituency parties and federations of parties and elected by their delegates, one is nominated by co-operative, socialist* and professional† organisations and elected by their delegates, and five are women, who may be nominated by any affiliated organisation and are elected by the Conference as a whole. The other two members are the Party Treasurer, also elected by the whole Conference, and the Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party who is *ex-officio*.

While, as we have seen, the unions provide the Labour Party with the bulk of its membership and finances and play an important part in its deliberations at all levels, it is with the support of parliamentary candidates that the political influence of trade unions is most commonly associated. In the Party's early days, all but a very few of its candidates were trade union nominees. Of the 57 Labour candidates returned at the 1918 General election 49 were nominated by the unions. Between the wars safe Labour seats were not infrequently regarded as being in the gift of this or that powerful union. At the 1935 election rather more than half the 154 Labour candidates returned enjoyed trade union backing. Of the total of 603 candidates nominated by the Party in 1945, 125 were put forward on the financial responsibility of the unions. All but five of the trade union nominees were successful and together accounted for just over 30 per cent of the total of 393 Labour members elected. The distribution of candidates and M.P.s as between the various unions in 1945 is set out in the following table:

* For instance, the Fabian Society.

† The Haldane Society is an example.

National Union of Mineworkers	34	34
Transport and General Workers' Union	18	17
National Union of Railwaymen	13	12
National Union of General and Municipal Workers	10	10
Railway Clerks' Association	9	9
National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers*	7	7
Amalgated Society of Woodworkers	4	3
National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives	4	4
Amalgamated Engineering Union	4	4
United Textile Factory Workers' Association	3	3
British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association	2	2
London Society of Compositors	2	2
Typographical Association	2	2
United Patternmakers' Association	2	2
National Union of Agricultural Workers	3	1
Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union	1	1
Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen	1	1
Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers	1	1
National Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks*	1	1
Electrical Trades Union	1	1
National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants	1	1
Direct Postal Representation Society	1	1
National Union of Life Assurance Workers	1	1

Contact between the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party is close and continuous. By its constitution the T.U.C. is pledged to assist any other organisation with similar objects, including, as has been noted earlier in this study, "the public ownership and control of natural resources and of services". Similarly, although more precisely, the Labour Party constitution provides for co-operation "with the General Council of the Trades Union Congress . . . in joint political or other action".

The most important formal link between the two organisations is that provided by the National Council of Labour, upon which also sit representatives of the Co-operative Union. Each of the three bodies is represented on the National Council by its Chairman and six other members. The secretaries of the three bodies act as Joint Secretaries of the Council.

The T.U.C. is represented by the Chairman and six members of the General Council, while the Labour Party is represented by the Chairman and two members of the National Executive Committee, together with the Chairman and three members of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party. The National Council holds regular monthly meetings and these are presided over by the Chairman of the three constituent bodies in turn.

The Council's duties embrace consideration of "all questions affecting the Labour and Co-operative Movements as a whole", and "the promotion of joint action, whether by legislation or otherwise, on all questions affecting the workers as producers, consumers and citizens". Among questions discussed at meetings of the Council during 1946-7 were British policy in Germany and Palestine, housing, health, manpower, the fuel crisis, the *Economic Survey for 1947*, and the co-ordination of the educational activities of the three constituent bodies.

Contact between the Council and the Labour Government is maintained through a

* These two unions have now amalgamated to form the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

Liaison Committee, established in 1945, consisting of the Chairmen and Secretaries of the three bodies, together with two members of the Government, one of whom is the Chief Whip. In addition, Ministers concerned with particular aspects of policy attend meetings of the Council from time to time for exchanges of views and information.

RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS

There have of course been contacts for consultation and bargaining between the trade unions and employers of separate industries ever since trade unionism began. These contacts have been described in the second study in this volume. The setting up of a General Council for the whole movement, with wider aims and policies than separate bargaining acts, suggested the need for a similar means of contact with organised employers as a whole.

In 1927, the year after the General Strike, Mr. George Hicks in his presidential speech to Congress spoke of the need for improved contact:

"I would say that we are just at the beginning of the constructive period of Trade Unionism. More and more, the workers are aiming at obtaining a share in the control and administration of industry through the Trade Unions. . . . We all know—employers as well as Trade Unionists—that the vexatious, toilsome, and difficult period through which we are passing is a transitional period. Much fuller use can be made under these conditions of the machinery for joint consultation and negotiation between employers and employed. . . . It is more than doubtful if we have seen the fullest possible development of machinery for joint consultation in particular industries. And practically nothing has yet been done to establish effective machinery of joint conference between the representative organisations entitled to speak for industry as a whole."

The Mond-Turner conversations

A statement was soon afterwards issued by the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations (now called the British Employers' Confederation). While expressing a willingness to contribute towards the promotion of industrial peace, the Confederation took the view that the general discussion of matters of mutual interest could best be tackled through the existing machinery in the various industries. Later in 1927, however, the General Council was invited by Sir Alfred Mond (afterwards Lord Melchett) and twenty other large employers, acting in their personal capacities, to take part in joint discussions covering the whole field of industrial relations and industrial reorganisation. This invitation was accepted although, as noted earlier in this study, the A.E.U. claimed that the General Council was exceeding its powers.

A number of joint meetings, styled the Conference on Industrial Reorganisation and Industrial Relations, was held between 1928 and 1930. At the first of these Sir Alfred Mond explained that he and his group fully recognised the advantages of contact with organised labour, and suggested a list of topics for discussion, among them rationalisation, the security and status of workers, housing, health and unemployment insurance, works councils, the causes of disputes, and the creation of a permanent Joint Committee.

From this last item emerged a proposal for the creation of a National Industrial Council, representative of the T.U.C. and the two employers' organisations (N.C.E.O. and the F.B.I.) which would meet regularly for general consultation and also establish

joint machinery for conciliation and for the continuous investigation of industrial problems. This proposal was ratified by the 1928 Trades Union Congress but was rejected by the two employers organisations, who, however, suggested that arrangements might be made for joint discussions between the three organisations on an occasional and *ad hoc* basis. The suggestion was accepted by the General Council, which during 1930 and 1931 met the F.B.I. for discussions on (1) the relationship between finance and industry, (2) inter-Commonwealth trade, and (3) the position of the British film industry. Only one subject—the displacement of labour as a result of rationalisation—was discussed with the National Confederation. After 1932, the machinery fell into disuse.

Thus, after five years, the attempt to set up joint machinery to cover industry as a whole came to very little. The idea of a National Industrial Council as endorsed by the Mond-Turner Conference was revived in the T.U.C. report on the *Public Control of Industry and Trade* submitted to the 1932 Congress and again in the interim report on *Post-War Reconstruction* approved by the Blackpool Congress of 1944.

The 1944 report also included a proposal for the establishment of Industrial Boards for non-nationalised industries. "Public control", said the report, "can be greatly facilitated if there exists in the private sectors of the national economy collective machinery for the examination of the general policy of an industry and the determination of questions relating to its internal organisation. . . . These Boards would be recognised as the bodies responsible for the internal regulation of the industry, and as the appropriate channel for interpreting the industry's requirements to the Government and applying the Government's requirements to the industry. Such Industrial Boards would need to be representative of all sections of the industry and should be composed of representatives of workpeople and employers in the industry in equal proportion. In order to secure better public participation and impartiality in their administration they should be presided over by a chairman appointed and paid by the Government for a definite term of years. It seems further desirable that he should be assisted by a small number of other members also appointed by the Government in consultation with the general interests affected. They should have no financial connection, directly or indirectly,* with the industry."*

In this recommendation, we have the pattern for the Development Councils now being set up under the Industrial Organisations and Development Act 1947, and for the working parties which preceded them. Development Councils may be expected to have an important influence on the future of employer-union relations *vis-à-vis* those wider questions of policy, organisation, and management excluded from the purview of the ordinary machinery of collective bargaining. The T.U.C., for their part, regard the establishment of the Councils as providing workpeople with the "permanent right of participation in the shaping of industrial policy"—a right which, rather optimistically perhaps, twenty years ago, they had hoped to secure by their participation in the Mond-Turner Conference.

RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

In the first World War, the trade union movement gained new recognition, and consolidated its position both with the Government and with organised employers. The ground so won was never entirely lost, though war-time conditions of full employment

* *Interim Report on Post-War Reconstruction*. T.U.C. 1944.

gave the trade unions a political strength which they could not exercise in the inter-war period, dominated as it was by unemployment.

Whereas the first World War expanded and formalised consultation with the trade union movement, the second confirmed it as a recognised and essential instrument of government. As early as March 1940, Sir Walter Citrine was telling a conference at Luton: "Today the fullest recognition is being given by the Government of the necessity for equality of status of the Trade Union movement with the employers. We have established, I think for the first time, a recognition from the Government which will be very useful in the post-war period."

At the beginning of the war, the Minister of Labour had established a National Joint Advisory Council to advise him on questions in which employers and workers had a common interest. It had a membership of thirty, drawn in equal proportions from the Trades Union Congress and the British Employers' Confederation. In May 1940, after the formation of the Churchill Government, the new Minister of Labour, Ernest Bevin, added a smaller Joint Consultative Committee similarly constituted. Trade unionists were also represented on the Labour Supply Board set up at this time, as they were on the Factory and Welfare Advisory Board established to advise on all questions of industrial safety, health and welfare.

The N.J.A.C. was allowed to lapse after the war, but was reconstituted in June 1946 in order to provide a regular channel whereby confidential and other information on Government policy and the national economic position could be made available to both sides of industry. In practice, the Council has been concerned with labour supply, working arrangements (e.g. the arrangement of shifts and staggered hours) and industrial relations generally. The Joint Consultative Committee was also reconstituted to serve as a sub-committee of the N.J.A.C. and to be available for consultation on urgent matters arising between meetings of the larger body.

For the first eight months of the war no attempt was made to evolve a comprehensive system of consultation on questions of production and supply. True, a Trade Union Advisory Committee had been appointed by the Minister of Supply following repeated requests for such a body put forward by the T.U.C. and the Labour Party, and Area Advisory Committees, representative of unions and employers' organisations, had been set up to advise the Ministry's Area Boards. But the Area Boards themselves consisted mainly of the chief local representatives of the Government departments concerned with supply.

In July 1940, Mr. Herbert Morrison, newly appointed Minister of Supply, overhauled the area machinery following representations by the T.U.C. The Area Boards were enlarged by the addition of three employers' and three workers' representatives, from whom the chairmen and vice-chairmen were appointed. In this way, the trade union and employers' representatives assumed executive functions. In 1941 these Area Boards became Regional Boards directly responsible to the Production Executive, their functions and powers being extended to make possible a two-way exchange of ideas between the two levels. A Central Joint Advisory Committee of employers and workers was also appointed to advise the Executive.

The organisation was further recast in 1942, following the establishment of the Ministry of Production, and the changes made followed the recommendations of a Joint Committee representative of employers and the T.U.C., presided over by Sir Walter Citrine. Regional Directors of Production were appointed to co-ordinate and supervise

the work of the Regional Boards and to preside at their meetings. Two vice-chairmen—one employer and one trade unionist—were also appointed. A National Production Advisory Council replaced the Central Joint Advisory Committee. It was composed of three representatives of the British Employers' Confederation, three of the F.B.I., six of the T.U.C. and eleven vice-chairmen of Regional Boards, of whom six were employers' and five workers' representatives. Under the Regional Boards were District Production Committees, consisting of three employers, three workers and one official in charge of the district office of the Ministry. These members were appointed by the Chairman of the Board on behalf of the Minister.

The N:P.A.C. formally ceased to exist when the relevant powers of the Ministry of Production passed to the Board of Trade. It was in practice reconstituted as the National Production Advisory Council on Industry under the chairmanship of the President of the Board of Trade. Its terms of reference cover industry in general in respect of such matters as raw material supplies and allocations, factory space and fuel supplies. It consists of seven representatives of the F.B.I. and the British Employers' Confederation and seven of the T.U.C. together with the eleven chairmen of Regional Boards. These chairmen are no longer Government officials. The Regional Boards, now purely advisory and not as during the war executive, consist of three or four employers' and workers' representatives with the senior regional representatives of the Board of Trade, Admiralty, Ministry of Supply, Labour, Transport, Fuel and Power, Works, and Town and Country Planning. Under these Boards remain the District Committees.

Among other war-time links between the Government and the trade union movement which have continued after the end of the war is the Rationing and Prices Committee of the T.U.C. Consisting of seven representatives of the General Council and the Secretary of the T.U.C.'s Economic Committee, it began as an Advisory Committee to the Ministry of Food. In 1941, its functions were extended to deal with the clothes rationing and with the price control of non-food items under the Board of Trade. The Committee holds regular meetings, and after each meeting its spokesmen meet the appropriate Minister or his deputy. There is little doubt that it has been influential, and embodying as it does worker-consumer interests, has helped to secure a fair and equitable distribution of essential goods in short supply.

Direct contact between the T.U.C. and the Board of Trade on wider issues is maintained through the long-standing practice of regular meetings between representatives of the Economic Committee and the President, together with the appropriate officials of his Department. Commenting on the meetings in its report to the 1946 Congress the General Council observed: "These discussions have led to a valuable interchange of views between the T.U.C. and the Government Department charged with particularly important tasks in relation to reconstruction policy. The Board of Trade has prepared a number of informative memoranda summarising the Government's policy and the progress which has been made on such subjects as the location of industry, the use of Government-owned factories, export trade and price control. The practice at the meetings is to take these memoranda and similar memoranda prepared by the T.U.C. as a basis for discussion."*

Similar consultative arrangements exist between the T.U.C. and the Ministries of Transport and Fuel and Power through the Transport Consultative Committee and the Fuel and Power Advisory Committee, both of which consist of seven members of the

* 1946 Congress Report, page 185.

General Council and the Secretary of the Economic Committee. Both these Committees were set up in 1946, the former to keep the Minister of Transport informed of T.U.C. views on the re-organisation and co-ordination of transport services and the latter to advise the Minister of Fuel and Power on questions relating to the fuel and power industries.

During 1946, four technical advisory committees were appointed by the Minister of Supply to advise on the development and efficiency of the industries for which his Department is responsible. These committees cover respectively the machine tool, gauge and tool, engineering, and motor industries. Each committee includes trade unionists drawn from the unions with memberships in the industries concerned. Also attached to the Ministry of Supply is the Iron and Steel Board, which has executive as well as advisory functions and includes two trade union members.

Other Governmental consultative and advisory bodies with trade union members include the Committee on Building Materials and Prices set up by the Minister of Works, the Central Price Regulation Committee, the Service Departments' Committees on Manpower Economy, the National Insurance Advisory Committee, the Colonial Labour Advisory Committee and the Colonial Economic and Development Council, and the Civil Aviation Consultative Council. This list, by no means exhaustive, is in itself a fair indication of the diversity of trade union interest.

The Economic Planning Board

The foregoing, in broad outline (and excluding the nationalised industries to which reference is made below), was the shape of the consultative machinery in which the unions had an interest at the beginning of 1947. The new planning proposals of the Government were announced in March 1947. In the words of the then President of the Board of Trade, "There are many wider issues on which His Majesty's Government feel the need of consultation with industry as a whole in regard to economic planning; and they intend to suggest to the various organisations concerned on both sides of industry that there should be a small board representative of the Government's planning staff and of both sides of industry, which would meet from time to time throughout the year to follow the development of the plan. The Government recognise that, if they are to get the best out of forward economic planning, they must have the help of both sides of industry in formulating and carrying out the plan. Industry must be brought into the planning process at an early stage and must have before them the facts which the Government Departments have at their disposal."*

Thus was created the Economic Planning Board, which after a brief period under the Lord President of the Council, is now responsible to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his capacity as the Minister responsible for the overall co-ordination of economic planning. The Board normally sits under the chairmanship of the Chief Planning Officer, and consists of three nominees of the T.U.C., three nominees of the F.B.I. and the British Employers' Federation, three members of the Economic Planning Staff, the Director of the Economic Section of the Cabinet Office, together with the permanent Secretaries of the Government departments concerned with trade and industry, namely, the Board of Trade and the Ministries of Labour and Supply. In announcing the constitution and functions of the Board on 7th July, the Lord President of the Council emphasised that the arrangements would be "in addition to and not instead of the arrangements for close

* Hansard, 10.3.'47. Col. 971.

consultation already maintained between industry and individual Departments". The T.U.C.'s agreement to submit nominees for the Board appears to have been given on a strict understanding of this fact. Reporting on the events leading up to the appointment of the Board to the 1947 Congress, the General Council stated: "It has been made clear to the Government and accepted by them that the existence of this Board and the General Council's representation on it must not reduce the freedom of the General Council to make representations to the Government at any time on industrial or economic questions."*

The nationalised industries and services

The organisational blueprint for the Labour Government's nationalisation measures was provided by the T.U.C. in the 1944 *Interim Report on Post-War Reconstruction*. In this report the General Council sought to plot the detailed application of the principle of public ownership and control through statutorily created corporations which had been accepted by both Congress and the Labour Party as long ago as 1932. In particular, the General Council addressed themselves to the problem of how best to secure the representation of workpeople through their trade unions in the direction of publicly owned industries. The passages in the report relating to this problem merit fairly full quotation:

"It does not seem by any means certain that it would be in the best interest of the workpeople of a nationalised industry to have, as directly representative of them, members of the controlling board who would be committed to its joint decisions. It will be essential, not only for the improvement of the standards and conditions of workpeople but because of the power of independent criticism they can exert, that the trade unions shall maintain their complete independence. They can hardly do so if they are compromised in regard to Board decisions which are not considered to be in their members' interests by the fact of their representatives' participation in them.

"Moreover, unless a workers' representative participates in responsibility for, and thereby authority over, the direction of industry, his status is likely to be in fact advisory or consultative. . . . Members of the governing body cannot at the same time answer to the workers of the industry as their representatives and bear responsibility to the Minister for its administration. To attempt to lay such a double duty on them may well result in making the governing body in a sense a negotiating committee in which the workers' representative will be in an ambiguous position.

"Ultimate control over the policy and direction of a public industry must be exercised by Parliament as representative of the community in general. . . . The governing Board of a public industry will . . . be required to determine and administer its policy solely in the public interest and should be accountable to the public through a Minister responsible to Parliament for its administration. It appears therefore that the persons composing that body should be selected by their competence to administer the industry in that sense.

"It is apparent that in this respect experience gained in the collective organisation of Labour is a strong qualification. Apart from people with this background, however, it seems probable that the field of selection for the members of Controlling Boards will in the main be limited to those who have acquired their qualification in the service of the State or of private industry, and in relation to this there is a certain fear that the administration of public industry will be in the hands of individuals

* 1947 Congress Report, page 152.

indifferent to the viewpoint of the workpeople. In the interest of the efficiency of the industry itself, therefore, and particularly in the context of the continuance of a wide range of private interests whose existence will to some extent condition its policy, it appears important to secure that there shall be on the governing body people who, though in no way accountable to any other interest than the public for their decisions, shall ensure that the views of the industry's workers on its management shall receive full consideration.

"This might best be secured by nomination by workers' organisations of candidates from whom the Minister shall select a number of the Board members. The T.U.C., as representative of the viewpoint of organised workers in general, might well serve as the channel for this, particularly since in cases where a number of separate unions each have a substantial membership in the industry, it would be difficult to determine the responsibility of the Minister concerned to the different unions. The T.U.C. would, of course, consult with the appropriate unions on the list of nominations. On the other hand, while those appointed should hold office for a definite period, it seems proper that they should surrender any position held in, or any formal responsibility to, the trade union."*

The procedure suggested here has by and large been followed by the Labour Government, except that in no case has the specific obligation to consult with the T.U.C. on the appointment of trade unionists to the governing Board been formally written into the nationalisation measure. Consultation has, however, taken place in all but two instances, these exceptions being the Boards of the Bank of England and the Airways Corporations. Nevertheless, all the Boards of the Industries and services nationalised so far include persons with trade union experience.

The National Coal Board and the British Electricity Authority each include two trade unionists, while the British Transport Commission includes one. Trade unionists have also been appointed to the Regional Coal Boards, to the Area Electricity Boards and to the Transport Executives. One out of the twelve part-time directors provided for by the Bank of England is a trade unionist. Each of the three Airways Corporations (B.E.A., B.O.A.C., B.S.A.A.) includes a part-time member with trade union experience, as also does the reconstituted Board of Cable and Wireless, Ltd.

Consultative machinery in the nationalised industries

The 1944 Interim Report also advocated the creation in the publicly owned industries of consultative councils representative of the Boards and their workpeople. These Councils it was suggested could meet frequently and regularly to discuss the policy of the industry or service and any other matter of mutual interest, apart from wages and conditions of employment which would be dealt with by separate negotiating machinery.

Consultative bodies of the kind suggested by the General Council have been provided for in the Coal, Civil Aviation, Transport and Electricity Acts. Typical is Section 46 of the Coal Nationalisation Act which required the National Coal Board to establish and maintain joint machinery for consultation with organisations "appearing to them to represent substantial proportions of the persons in the employment of the Board", on

- (i) "questions relating to safety, health and welfare;
- (ii) "the organisation and conduct of the operations in which such persons are employed and other matters of mutual interest to the Board and such persons".

* *Interim Report on Post-War Reconstruction*. T.U.C. 1944.

In accordance with this provision, a National Consultative Council for the coalmining industry was established by an agreement concluded between the N.C.B. and the National Union of Mineworkers on 27th November, 1946. The Council has 27 members, of whom 6 are appointed by the Board, 9 by the National Union of Mineworkers, 9 by the National Association of Colliery Deputies Associations. The Chairman of the Board acts as chairman of the Council and each of the other organisations represented appoints a deputy chairman. Meetings of the Council are held at monthly intervals, although special meetings may be held in the intervening periods to deal with urgent questions. There are also similarly constituted Divisional and Area Consultative Councils and Colliery Consultative Committees at individual pits.

For Civil Aviation there is a National Joint Council for Civil Air Transport. It consists of 35 members of whom 15 represent the three corporations and 20 represent the trade unions with members in the industry. The unions include the Air Line Pilots' Association, A.S.S.E.T., the Radio Officers' Union, the A.E.U. and the Transport and General. For the discussion of sectional problems the Council has ten Joint Panels covering respectively pilot officers, navigation and engineering officers, radio, supervisory engineering and maintenance, draughtsmen and planners, maintenance and repair engineering, surface transport and goods handling, general service workers, catering and clerical and administrative staffs.

In addition to this machinery provided for by the Civil Aviation Act there is also a National Civil Aviation Consultative Council set up by the Minister in January 1947 "to be a forum for the review of developments in civil aviation generally". Apart from representatives of air line operators, users and aircraft manufacturers, the Council includes nominees of the unions represented in the industry and also a representative of the T.U.C.

Although no provision for consultative machinery was made in the Bank of England Act, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at a meeting with the Economic Committee of the T.U.C. in July 1946, agreed on the necessity for such machinery, but suggested that as a first step the National Union of Bank Employees should approach the Board of the Bank. Subsequently, in November 1946, the Union reported that their claim for formal representation on the Bank Staff Advisory Council had been rejected by the Bank. An undertaking had, however, been given that the matter would be considered again in the event of a substantial increase in the union's membership among employees of the Bank.*

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The international relations and activities of the British trade union movement constitute in themselves a considerable subject for study, but it is not possible here to do more than refer to them in briefest outline. At the present time, they include direct links between the T.U.C. and the central trade union bodies of France,† the Soviet Union‡ and between the T.U.C. and the two main wings of the American trade union movement, the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O.§ The T.U.C. also maintains close fraternal relations with Colonial and Commonwealth unions, both directly and within the framework of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

* Consultative machinery at the lower levels is described more fully on pp. 139-140, below.

† Anglo-French Trade Union Committee.

‡ Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee.

§ T.U.C.—A.F. of L. Joint Committee, and T.U.C.—C.I.O. Joint Committee.

There are also the affiliations of individual unions to federations of unions concerned with specific trades and industries in different countries. For instance, the three railway unions (N.U.R., A.S.L.E.F. and R.C.A.), the Transport and General and the National Union of Seamen are all affiliated to the International Transport Workers' Federation. Similarly, the National Union of Mineworkers is affiliated to the Miners' International Federation. These federations, known collectively as the International Trade Secretariats, exist to promote the mutual interests of the workers which they represent both nationally and internationally. They also act as channels for the exchange of information and the formulation of common policies.

For nearly thirty years, the British trade union movement has played a useful and important part in the activities of the International Labour Organisation. Although the I.L.O. is an official body in that it is an association of States, its constitution provides for the participation of employees and workers as well as governments. A full Member-State's delegation to the annual International Labour Conference totals four, of whom two represent the Government and the others employers and workers respectively. The employers' and workers' delegates are chosen by Governments in agreement with representative organisations in their respective countries. Thus the British workers' delegate is chosen in consultation with the T.U.C. All delegates to the Conference are entitled to one vote each, and workers' and employers' representatives are free to vote quite independently of what their respective Governments may do. In practice the workers' representatives from the various countries tend to vote in concert, as also do the employers. Over the years since 1919, a well-defined group system has grown up, with Governments, employers and workers meeting separately before and during the conference to determine their attitudes to the various items on the agenda.

Workers and employers are also represented on the Governing Body, which is the Executive Council of the Organisation and which exercises general supervision over the work of the International Labour Office. The tripartite basis of representation also operates for all specialised agencies and committees appointed by the Organisation to deal with specific issues.*

The I.L.O. has often been described as the "World Parliament of Labour". Since 1945, this designation has also been applied to the World Federation of Trade Unions.

The W.F.T.U. was formed as a result of the initiative taken by the T.U.C. to call a World Trade Union Conference which met in London in February 1945 to consider "the most pressing problems both of policy and organisation affecting the interests of working people and thereby to promote the widest possible unity, in aim and action, of the International Trade Union Movement".

At this Conference it was unanimously resolved to establish "a World Trade Union Organisation, including all the Trade Unions of free countries, on a basis of equality, regardless of race, creed or political faith, excluding none and relegating none to a secondary place". A Committee was appointed to draft a constitution for the new organisation in readiness for its adoption at a second conference in Paris in the autumn of 1945. The Paris Conference met in October when the new body was formally established and the Conference transformed itself into the first Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions, with Sir Walter Citrine as its first President and M. Louis Saillant of France as General Secretary.

* For example, the International Industrial Committees which have been set up since 1945 to advise on the problems of particular industries and on the possibilities of their solution by international action.

The World Congress, consisting of delegations from affiliated organisations (usually the national centres in each country) is the sovereign authority of the Federation. It meets biennially although provision exists for extraordinary Congresses to be convened. Representation at Congress is not in direct proportion to membership, but is scaled down progressively as membership increases. Voting rights and affiliation fees are similarly calculated, the object being to prevent any one organisation from dominating the federation. Next in the administrative structure comes the General Council, elected by Congress, then an Executive Committee also elected by Congress, and lastly, a smaller Executive Bureau which is appointed by the Executive Committee.

Provision is also made within the framework of the Federation for a system of International Trade Departments designed to deal with technical and social questions relating to specific trades and industries. By this provision, it was hoped to provide a means whereby the International Trade Secretariats, referred to earlier in this section, could be assimilated into the machinery of the Federation. Since 1945, protracted discussions have been held between the Federation and the Secretariats on this question, without agreement being reached.

From its foundation, the W.F.T.U. has sought to secure representation on all the United Nations agencies concerned with the regulation of social and economic conditions. In February 1946 it secured the right to be associated in an advisory and consultative capacity with the Economic and Social Council of the U.N.—a right afforded at the same time to the American Federation of Labour (which is not affiliated to W.F.T.U.) and to the International Co-operative Alliance. In addition, W.F.T.U. observers and advisers have been present at meetings of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the Health Organisation and of U.N.E.S.C.O. and at the International Conference on Trade and Employment held at Geneva in the summer of 1947.

In 1947, the W.F.T.U. claimed an affiliated membership of 70 million workers drawn from 71 national organisations, among them the T.U.C., the Soviet Central Council, the French C.G.T., the American C.I.O. and the Canadian Trade and Labour Congress.

RELATIONS ON THE JOB

INTRODUCTION

As described in an earlier study, trade unions developed in this country originally from associations of workers in a single town doing the same sort of work, though not necessarily for the same employer. Craft unions of this type came first in order of time. Later on, craftsmen began to combine larger unions covering whole industries, first in a limited area and then nationally; later other types of worker began to be drawn in, and later still the two big unions catering for general workers appeared. In all of these, and especially in the craft and general unions, the factor which governs the union to which a particular worker belongs is in most cases the nature of his work and not the place where he is employed or the employer for whom he works. Throughout the history of trade unionism the basic unit of organisation has therefore been the branch and not the workplace. Union structure grew from the branch upwards, and it was not until the higher stages of conference, national executive, and district committee were complete that attention was turned to improving and systematising organisation at the place of work. In some instances, where the numbers employed warrant it, the membership of a branch and at a place of work are the same. In the majority of cases, however, branches still cover more than one workplace.

The opinion is often advanced that union organisation should be based primarily or entirely on the place of work. But although there might be advantages in this, such as the simplification of union structure, there is a great weight of feeling and tradition against it. A worker doing a particular type of job for a particular employer will generally feel a closer kinship with others of his own trade in other factories or firms than with those of a different trade working for the same employer. There has always, too, been some distrust of confining combination at its lowest level to the employees of a particular concern, as offering possibilities of employer's control and company unionism; moreover, the danger of victimisation has usually been regarded as greater in cases where the immediate support of workers in other factories cannot be called upon. For these reasons, as well as for the normal human dislike of changing established institutions, proposals to abandon the branch system in favour of a purely workshop organisation are likely to be strongly resisted by the majority of trade unionists.

With the increasing tendency for decisions on important matters of policy to be taken nationally rather than regionally or locally, the pre-eminence of the branch has gradually been lost to the annual delegate conference and the elected national executive. The older group methods, with their primitive democracy of members holding office by lot and participating directly in the making of rules and in negotiations and decisions on policy, have been replaced by written constitutions modelled on the pattern of political representation. At the same time, contact between the member and the branch has been weakened by the growth in branch membership; it has become physically impossible for all or most members to attend a branch meeting, and less likely that most would wish to do so.

A new link had to be created between the member and his branch. This link was the collector, steward, father of the chapel, delegate, corresponding member, works

representative (there are many titles) performing two functions. He collected opinions, grievances and sometimes subscriptions and took them to the branch meeting or branch committee; he also came to be called upon, as a representative of the union on the spot, to deal with complaints in the workplace without prior reference to the branch. This aspect of his work assumed great proportions during the first World War. The next step was the formation of committees of these stewards in a workplace, first of one union and then of kindred unions; these committees were then linked not so much to the branch as to the district organisation of the union or federation of unions.

I. ORGANISATION AT THE PLACE OF WORK

The shop steward

A new factor comes into the three-level analysis with the development of trade union organisation on the job, which in war-time tended to become the focus of second-level activity. The steward is essentially of the second level. He does a great deal of unpaid union work and he is necessarily in more direct and continuous contact with his constituents—in this case the union members in his shop, or on his site—than the branch official can be. In unions where stewards are numerous and active, and where their task extends beyond the collection of dues, the result is to make the second level more radical than it would otherwise be. In such unions, of which the A.E.U. is outstanding, stewards tend to have a closer link with the rank and file of the third level than could be obtained by other methods of organisation, a link which extends to all sorts of personal and domestic matters on which their guidance is sought by members. At the same time, the average shop steward's lively interest in politics may outrun that of the third level as a whole.

The large majority of unions now have workplace representation of one kind or another. Of the unions affiliated to the T.U.C. the rules of forty-eight, with a total membership of four and a half millions, have been examined. These unions cover a wide variety of industries and include small, medium, and very large unions. Of the forty-eight investigated, eighteen have collectors, twenty-seven have stewards or similar workshop representatives (including seven in which these stewards are also collectors), while four others, without having either stewards or collectors, have some organisation at the place of work between the member and his branch.* Of the remaining six societies, some cater for very specialist crafts with few members in any one place or, in addition to having a small membership, are confined to one locality.† These workplace representatives, for convenience referred to below as stewards in all cases, are appointed in a variety of ways. They may be elected by the members they will directly represent or by the branch to which the members belong; some are elected subject to the approval of the union's district committee. If there are few members concerned some unions provide that the first man on the job shall be the steward; as more members arrive, or are recruited, elections take place. The following extracts from union rules are given as examples of the methods used:

"In shops where four or more members are employed, a steward shall be appointed by show of hand. The steward will be under the jurisdiction of the district committee or, where no such committee exists, of his branch" (Electrical Trades Union).

"Stewards shall be elected by a majority vote of members working at a given job. . . . The stewards shall co-operate with and be under the jurisdiction of the management committee of the district" (Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers).

* For example, the chapel in printing unions.

† For example, the Iron, Steel & Wood Barge Builders' & Helpers' Association, whose members work around the Port of London.

"It shall be the duty of each chapel to appoint one of their members as collector, to gather the subscriptions from every member employed in the office or chapel. . . . It shall also be the duty of the father of the chapel to make a monthly return of the number of journeymen employed in the office" (London Society of Compositors).

"Shop stewards shall be recognised by all members as the accredited representatives in all shops. . . . The first member on the job shall act as steward until more members are employed, when they must elect their own. . . . Members refusing to carry out duties when appointed shall be fined 2s. 6d." (Plumbing Trades Union).

"There shall be a shop secretary elected by the shop subject to the approval of the branch committee. His duties shall be to report any dispute or grievance against his employer or breach of rule by fellow members in his shop to the branch committee and to collect contributions weekly. He shall be empowered to examine the pay packet of any member if any doubt exists as to him receiving the rate. Any member refusing to show his packet shall be dealt with by the committee" (National Union of Vehicle Builders).

"Any manufactory where members are employed must appoint a shop steward to collect contributions. . . . The shop steward shall convene all shop meetings and pricing committees, and shall notify members of branch meetings and other business connected with the society. Any matter that may arise affecting other firms or branches, he shall report to the branch committee, who shall deal with same" (National Union of Sheet Metal Workers and Braziers).

"It shall be the duty of the works' representative to interview employers when instructed by the branch committee on matters arising in the works affecting the terms or conditions of employment of any member of the branch. Where the matter is one of urgency the works' representative may, after consultation with the branch secretary, arrange to interview the employer before receiving the instructions of the branch committee without unnecessary delay. The works' representative should, as far as is practicable, be accompanied by the branch secretary, together with a small deputation of one or more of the members concerned" (British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association).

"Each branch may appoint as many collecting stewards as they require for the efficient collection of the members' contributions. . . . They shall carry out their duties under the direction of branch secretaries and shall collect member's contributions and entrance fees from any new members" (National Union of Public Employees).

Functions of stewards

Some unions issue their stewards with a credential card which includes instructions, either in full or by reference to the union's rules, as to their functions and responsibilities, and although stewards are not used by all unions to the same extent and in the same ways they have five main functions. Either individually or as members of shop committees they recruit new members, check membership cards for arrears of contributions, and in many cases collect contributions.* They provide a most useful link between the member

* Where unions do not provide that contributions must be paid at branch meetings by the members themselves collection, in most cases by agreement with managements, is done during working hours. In the National Society of Pottery Workers, however, some of the collecting is done by calling at members' houses.

who is unable or unwilling to attend branch meetings and the branch or district machinery of the union whereby complaints are forwarded and the width or measure of a particular grievance or opinion can be established and local policy decided accordingly. To facilitate this liaison some unions make special provision that stewards as such shall be members of their district committees, apart from those members elected as branch representatives who may also be stewards.

The A.E.U. rules, for instance, provide that stewards shall be directly represented on such committees on the basis of one for every 5,000 members or part thereof; these representatives are elected at an annual meeting of stewards convened by the district secretary. A third function of stewards, and one used in very many unions, is to provide a recognised channel for raising grievances, either direct with the management after an aggrieved member has himself failed to obtain satisfaction, or by transmitting them to the branch secretary for further action. The rules of B.I.S.A.K.T.A., for example, provide that "on a dispute arising in any works between members and their employer, or between members and members, and which might lead to a stoppage of work, arrangements shall be made for the works' representative, accompanied by a deputation, to interview the employer with a view to an amicable settlement. Failing a settlement by these means, the branch secretary shall without delay report the whole facts of the dispute to the divisional officer . . . who shall interview the employer. Failing a settlement by these means, the divisional officer shall send a full report to the executive council."

In engineering the procedures of the 1922 Agreement for the Avoidance of Disputes are as follows: Operatives must first discuss the question on which they are concerned with their foreman, and if the matter is not settled it is then taken up with the foreman or shop foreman by one of the operatives together with his steward. If agreement is not reached it may then be referred to the works' committee, if one exists, or to an *ad hoc* conference. The local full-time officer of the union and of the employers' association may enter at this stage. If there is still a failure to agree there are the two further stages of local conference and central conference at York, or recourse may be had to the National Arbitration Tribunal.

Some agreements have provided that stewards receiving complaints from members "shall immediately convey them to the branch secretary in order that he may take the necessary steps to see that they are forwarded to head office for attention".* Other agreements specifically recognise not only stewards of one union, but stewards' committees of more than one union; for instance, "the employers shall permit the unions' members to elect stewards and a small representative committee . . . the unions undertake to instruct such persons elected in their rights and duties, which shall be conducted at all times in a fair and equitable manner between employers and employees".† It would be difficult to overemphasise the importance of this function of stewards either from the point of view of giving service to the membership or of establishing harmony in the workplace. It would not be expected, however, that the degree of negotiating skill required is a universal attribute of stewards.

A fourth function is the negotiation of piece and bonus rates. This practice, discussed in the third study of this series, is much more prevalent in metal and engineering than elsewhere, though stewards negotiate revision of piece rates in other industries, such as

* N.U.D.A.W. (now U.S.D.A.W.) with the Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd.

† Working Rule Agreement between employers and three unions concerned with displays and exhibitions.

tailoring, while in certain sections of the pottery industry there are pricing committees for this purpose. For example, the rules of the Birmingham and Midland Sheet Metal Workers' Society state:

"Any article introduced into any manufactory, not previously priced, shall be priced by a majority of members working in the shop, or by a committee of members, and no price shall be recognised except in accordance with this rule. The shop steward shall enter the same in a book (kept by him for that purpose and provided by the society), failing which he shall be liable to any fine not exceeding 5s. the executive committee shall deem fit."

Stewards do not negotiate time or district rates; some unions specifically prohibit them from doing so, as in the following extract from the rules of the National Union of Vehicle Builders:

"No question involving a change in the established district rates of pay or over-time or holiday time or other matters of similar importance shall be entered into with any management, nor shall any shop committee take part in a discussion on matters of principle along with the firm or the employers' association. All such matters shall be handed over without delay to the branch officials of the society (it should be noted that any departure from established condition, or non-payment of the rate, may be dealt with by the committee)."

Finally, stewards are the eyes and ears through which the elected policy-making committees of unions and their administrative staff can be kept supplied with information about employers' practices and members' wishes and requirements. Much of this information is provided informally in conversations and at branch or district meetings. In some unions stewards are responsible for convening shop meetings for discussion of particular problems and are provided with forms on which to make periodic returns and answers to such questions as numbers employed, state of trade, state of union organisation, recent alterations in piece rates, prices charged by the firm (in cases where the steward can know this—for instance, boot and shoe repairs). The shipwrights, for example, issue forms for quarterly returns by each yard delegate, while the London Society of Compositors includes the following obligation in its rules:

"It shall also be the duty of the father of the chapel to make a monthly return, on a form provided for that purpose on the back of the collecting sheet, of the number of journeymen employed in the office, specifying the number of case compositors (full frame and grass hands) on piece and 'stab respectively, the number of machine compositors and the number and description of machines in use, the number and description of readers, the number of apprentices and the system under which they work; also the number of overtime hours worked by each member during the month, together with any special circumstances in the mode of working the office which are contrary to the scales or customs of the trade or the rules of the society."

Conversely, many unions keep their stewards informed of the progress of external negotiations with the managements by sending copies of correspondence which has passed between the firm and their district or national officers.*

In industries such as printing, building, and engineering, where the members of a considerable number of unions are engaged at work in the same factory or site, steps

* e.g. Birmingham and Midland Sheet Metal Workers' Society.

have been taken to link the unions' workplace officials and machinery together in ways similar to those adopted nationally and in the districts. Just as the unions in these three industries have formed federations* for discussion and decision on problems in which they all have a common interest, so also joint committees of the stewards of these unions have been formed in the various workplaces with representatives elected to speak for the members of all the unions concerned. In printing this representative is known as the imperial father; in building he is the federation steward, and on a large site he may spend his working hours entirely in negotiation with management on labour and welfare problems. A more recent development in engineering has been the co-option on the district committee of the confederation of the chairman and secretary of each stewards' committee in establishments where several unions are involved. This method may well solve the dilemma stated by Lord (then Sir Walter) Citrine in 1942:† "Just as the shop stewards individually have proved of value to the separate trade unions, so the shop stewards' committees rightly guided and linked up with the trade unions collectively can become not less serviceable to the trade union movement as a whole. There is no link between the shop stewards' committee as such and individual trade unions. Nor is it easy to see how such a committee could have a direct connection with a particular union. Its members represent all the unions, and therefore if it is to function as a unit in discussions with the management it should have contact with somebody representing the interests of the unions as a whole. It is here that the difficulty arises. No such link has ever existed."

As has been said above, the term "steward", strictly apposite only in certain unions in building and engineering, is here used throughout as a convenient term to apply to all union workplace representatives. A further warning may, however, be necessary, since the word "steward" has obtained in the public mind a coloured significance which the facts do not support. Although in some unions many stewards are favourably inclined towards the Communist Party and doubtless some are in most unions, and though it is often these stewards who become most prominent, a soundly based judgment becomes possible only if a distinction is drawn between those stewards who are a mainstay of their union and those who obtain temporary individual prominence.

The normal steward is not as a rule out for prominence. He works hard, remains in office for long periods, understands the structure of his union and the procedures of his firm and industry, and his own part in both. The difficulties and complexities of his job are perhaps not widely recognised, and they are, of course, greater in new industries or where union organisation is too recent to have permitted traditions to develop. The steward has to learn the art of representation with little (sometimes no) formal guidance‡ and often without the steadying influence of an informed "electorate". National officers of unions are responsible to their executive, district and branch officers to their committee; they are responsible, that is, to persons who are both interested in and informed on the problems with which the officers are dealing. It is not so with the steward; the rules of his union may say he is responsible to his district committee, but much of his work is on day-to-day matters not brooking delay. He receives complaints and is expected

* Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, National Federation of Building Trades Operatives, Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions.

† *Sheffield Telegraph*, November 26, 1942.

‡ Early in 1947 the Ministry of Labour sought to interest certain of the larger unions in the courses "Training within Industry for Shop Stewards". The courses were planned to be for ten hours' duration in five two-hour sessions. Beyond the mention made of the proposals in the report of the Southport Congress, 1947, and the use of it in the training courses organised by the General Council themselves, no further developments are known.

to rectify many grievances for which there may be little foundation in fact; seeking to get the full facts may lead the member concerned to ask "Whose side are you on?" and rivals to denounce him as a boss's man. He may take action involving the prestige of his union which was ill-advised, but unless he reports against himself it is unlikely that his district committee will learn of his errors until it is too late. He has a wide field to cover. It is his initiative which recruits members and keeps them informed; it is to him that members take general problems for advice and information, home complaints as well as work grievances.

To many members the steward is the union. It is not surprising, therefore, that the turnover among stewards in their first year or so of office is very great. In a new firm or recently organised undertaking the steward may be young in years as well as membership and his industrial experience may be scanty; with no local traditions to assist he may accept guidance from sources foreign to the leanings of his membership, and if trouble breaks he may abdicate denouncing the "apathy" of his colleagues. In such cases, if he be reprimanded by the management or dismissed, he may be left without support from the members in his shop who had not instructed him to take the course he did nor been consulted by him upon it.

Protecting the steward

It was presumably with these infrequent occurrences in mind that during 1947 an agitation was commenced to demand legislative protection for stewards. Yet it is not union policy to seek to create "preferential categories" in the workplace. Real victimisation—dismissal coupled with black-listing of accredited spokesmen and even for union membership alone*—has, of course, been widespread in the past, and unions from the earliest times built up defences against it and arranged compensation in case of defeat; as a policy victimisation has, however, long since been discarded by the employers' associations.

The following extracts from union rules are examples of protection methods:

"Any member victimised shall be allowed his time rate of wages if a time worker or the average rate of wages of the shop if a piece worker until he again finds employment. He shall be allowed the expense of removing himself, family and effects to wherever he may obtain employment" (General Iron Fitters' Association).

"Anyone giving information which is likely to prejudice or injure a steward is liable to be fined £5" (United Boilermakers' and Iron and Steel Shipbuilding Society).

"If any member should be discharged from his or her employment in consequence of adhering to the rules of the society, or for holding office, or attending to council meetings, or deputations to masters, or collecting contributions, taking any prominent part in disputes, or in any other legal way advocating the claims and furthering the objects of the society, such member must immediately communicate the particulars of the case through the lodge or permanent officials, who shall promptly investigate the case with a view of restoring the member back to work. If found impossible to do so, the district committee shall have power to grant the member twenty weeks' strike benefits" (National Society of Pottery Workers).

* In the first world war, under the Munitions of War Act (1917), victimisation on grounds only of being a member of a union was temporarily forbidden by law.

“Any officer, committee man, steward, collector or member losing his situation through his active and judicious participation in the affairs of the society shall be supported, subject to the sanction of the N.E.C., up to two-thirds of his day rate” (National Society of Metal Mechanics).

“Shop stewards shall be elected wherever possible by the membership in organised factories, garages, depots, wharves, and on building jobs, etc., and shall receive the fullest support and protection from the union, and immediate inquiry shall be undertaken by the appropriate trade group committee into every case of dismissal of a shop steward with a view to preventing victimisation, either open or concealed” (Transport and General Workers’ Union).

II. JOINT CONSULTATION

Early developments

There were many examples in the years between the wars of formal machinery for joint consultation between workers and management in the place of work, but the variety of methods used and the lack of published material makes it difficult to form a worthwhile judgment on their value. The widespread demand for new methods during and since the second World War may, however, be taken as proof that joint workshop machinery was neither sufficiently general nor comprehensive enough in scope to satisfy the unions. There were works committees on the Whitley pattern whose existence was more permanent in Government establishments than in the other industries which adopted the Joint Industrial Council methods and procedures. There were also the works' committees for which the York agreements of 1919 and 1922 had provided in the engineering industry. The scope and functions of these committees and of stewards in engineering were the subject of prolonged discussion in the years immediately following 1919, and after the lockout and the resulting Court of Inquiry a revised national agreement was reached in 1922 which made the setting up of works committees permissive on agreement by both sides in any one factory. In general the agreement was applied only in the larger establishments. There was, in addition, a number of joint bodies to which the title "works' committee" was, or could have been, given, although many of these were not based on trade unions. Of these some included only trade unionists on the workers' side, but without being recognised or included in the joint machinery of the industries as a whole, and there was no procedure for appeal to higher joint authority; in others the workers' side was not composed of trade unionists, or not necessarily so. There were, for instance, factory councils in sections of the rubber industry where employees had to sign an undertaking that they would be bound by the decisions of these councils even on wages questions; such councils were, of course, regarded with more than suspicion by trade unionists as productive of "house unionism" and as seeking to usurp proper trade union functions. Many committees were concerned with social functions, sports, welfare in the sense of entertainments—everything, indeed, except the really important matters of production and discipline.

The Whitley Reports had said it was not enough to secure co-operation at the centre, and had recommended district councils and works committees. The reports strongly deprecated the establishment of works committees without the co-operation of trade unions and employers' organisations. The Ministry of Labour published in 1918 detailed suggestions for the consideration of industry on works' committees,* one of the objects of which would be "to give employees a wider interest in and greater responsibility for the conditions in which their work is performed". In a list of functions "not meant to be exhaustive and making no attempt to include such questions as arise only in some industries" the Ministry proposed it would be suitable for works committees to deal with the following:

- (i) the issue and revision of works rules;

* Model Constitution for Works Committees, Ministry of Labour, 1918.

- (ii) questions of discipline and conduct as between management and workpeople (malingering, bullying, time-keeping, supervision of notice-boards).
- (iii) terms of engagement of workpeople;
- (iv) technical library; lectures on the technical and social aspect of the industry;
- (v) training of apprentices;
- (vi) suggestions for improvements in method and organisation of work; the testing of suggestions.

The Ministry, itself only twelve months old, was in advance of the times. Other suggested items, which have become widely accepted as subjects for joint discussion either in the workplace or by national or district agreement, were the settlement of grievances, holiday arrangements, distribution of working hours and breaks, method of payment of wages, safety, entertainments, and sports. In 1922 there were over a thousand of these committees under Joint Industrial Councils, but four years later the Balfour Report noted a great decline in numbers. Some of the reasons for the decline were the employers' dislike for sharing responsibility for or information about their business either with their employees or with fellow employers, with the result that the more vital problems did not find their way to the agenda. On the other side the trade unions were distrustful of employers' motives, especially if profit-sharing was suggested, for the shop stewards' movement of the 1914-18 war had not aimed at co-operation with management to the extent that it did in the second war. The slogan had been "workers' control", an emotional appeal of which the positive implications were not advanced, but of which the underlying causes were impatience with slow progress and the absence of any desire to improve productive efficiency under capitalist ownership. By 1926 the impetus had gone. For instance, in the Report of the Organisation Committee of the Pottery J.I.C. (1925) on works committees, it was stated that many suggestions had been made whereby working operations had been improved, the carrying out of which resulted in less fatigue to the operative and the saving of time and money to the firm, and that waste and breakages had been reduced and organisation improved, leading in some instances to an additional oven being filled each week. But despite these examples of success neither side was sufficiently interested to make any effort to keep the committees alive. The Pottery Working Party has recently recommended their re-establishment.

The decade after the General Strike was a difficult period for the unions. Energies were spent in halting the decline in membership, reformulating national policy on industrial questions, meeting Communist attempts to form a rival congress, and in pursuing the regular aims of the movement through the established machinery. It was not a time for consideration of new methods of joint discussion and negotiation in the workplace. However, in an article entitled "The Next Step in Industrial Relations",* written in 1927, Lord (then Mr. W. M.) Citrine said:

"The trade unions . . . are pursuing logically and consistently the line of policy they have pursued from their earliest days. History attests the fact that the main object of the unions has been in the past to get the best out of the existing system. Unions should actively participate in a concerted effort to raise industry to its highest efficiency by developing the most scientific method of production, eliminating waste and harmful restrictions . . . and promoting the largest possible output so as to provide a rising standard of life and continuously improving standards of

* *Manchester Guardian Supplement*, November 30, 1927.

employment. . . . Not only do the unions claim to be consulted about [the application of rationalisation proposals] to the concrete problems of industrial organisation, but they have a positive contribution to make in developing them over the whole field of production."

Moreover, it was decided at the Swansea congress in 1928 that "the ultimate policy of the movement can find more use for an efficient industry than for a derelict one", and it might have been expected that a policy which led to the Mond-Turner conversations and to a series of joint meetings with employers' national associations would have resulted in new interest in consultation in the workplace. However, the new policy was agreed to only after opposition and without understanding of its implications by union members in the workplaces; an atmosphere of lockouts, bitterness, declining membership, and huge unemployment figures is not one in which co-operation for mutual advantage will flourish.

In the 1930s such initiative as there was came from individual employers in whom a paternal instinct was strong, and it was not until after Dunkirk that significant developments in workshop joint machinery took place. The special conference of trade union executives held in May 1939 had endorsed the General Council's proposals for National Industrial Councils. One of the duties of these councils would be to evolve the best system of utilising labour in time of war and to determine machinery to deal fully with the question of transference of labour in a war emergency. The councils would also decide what adaptations or additions were necessary to existing machinery in their industry in order to expedite settlement of questions concerning wages, hours or conditions of employment. There was no mention of consultation on increasing production, except in so far as schemes to widen collective bargaining and to evolve the best system of utilising labour would be bound to increase it, and no mention of workplace co-operation. The impact of the war itself soon developed requirements and suggestions not mentioned when war was only a prospect.

During the first year of the war representatives of unions and of employers were consulted more and more frequently by Government agencies, but it was not until 1941 that any wide interest was shown towards extending joint consultation in the workplace itself or widening the scope of existing works, yard or site committees to include production questions. Towards the end of 1940 the Coal Production Council had, however, begun to encourage the establishment of pit production committees, and the Minister of Labour had called for regular discussion between managements and workers' representatives in all industrial establishments.* The A.E.U. began discussions on the question with the Engineering Employers' Federation in mid-1941, and in October the Midland Regional Board recommended firms in the region to set up "Joint Production Inquiry Committees". The idea was gathering strength and received support from Cabinet Ministers and individual employers who, if not convinced that the men at the bench would have worthwhile suggestions to put forward, saw the value of such consultation from the point of view of morale. In January 1942 the T.U.C. called a conference of representatives of engineering unions to devise suitable machinery, and this was followed in February by the setting up of J.P.C.s in ordnance factories operated by the Ministry of Supply, and in March by a national agreement for private engineering establishments. In June the Government, under its Coal Plan and at the request of the unions, decided that cases of absenteeism or indiscipline should not in future be referred to pit production

* Mr. Ernest Bevin, House of Commons, December 21, 1940.

committees, so that the committees could concentrate on increasing output, while later in the year the Select Committee on National Expenditure recommended that yard committees should be universal in shipbuilding and their functions widened to include production questions.

In addition to this new machinery there was, during the same period, a great increase in informal consultation in employment of all kinds. Hours were extended and changes necessitated by transport difficulties, air-raid precautions and fire-watching had to be arranged, canteens were established, and all these questions necessitated some form of consultation between management and workers. Indeed, management, which, like operatives, had been "diluted", soon found that its old methods were of little avail in the new circumstances, with a war atmosphere, novel problems, and the diminishing effect of the threat of dismissal as a solution to personnel difficulties.

The history of the establishment of these consultative committees on production methods at the place of work and their relationship to other production machinery, together with details of the agreements upon which they were based and descriptions of their composition and procedures, have been dealt with in publications of the International Labour Office.* Inquiries into the detailed work of such committees, their prevalence and effectiveness in their first year of working have also been published by the A.E.U.† and the Industrial Welfare Society.‡

It is not proposed to summarise here the information already available in these publications. For our purpose it is more relevant to ask why the decline in J.P.C.s from 1945 onwards was almost as rapid as the increase had been in 1942. It was officially stated in June 1944 that 4,565 J.P.C.s or equivalent bodies were in existence, yet while some of these existed more on paper than in reality and although no figures are now available,§ the decline in numbers has probably been comparable to the decline in works committees in the early 1920's. Some of the reasons for the decline are to be found in the vast change in industrial personnel since the war. Many firms closed down or changed their type of production; other firms took over the premises and engaged different staff. Moreover, millions of Servicemen with no experience of J.P.C.s returned to civilian employment, and millions of civilians either returned to their pre-war homes or to their peace-time occupations. On top of this upheaval of personnel and type of manufacture there was, of course, the "end of the war" feeling, a desire to relax after years of earnestness and the fact that the common purpose of both sides in the factory was no longer so easily understandable.

Joint consultation since the war

In contrast to the early 1920's, however, steps have been taken to halt the decline. The J.P.C. agreement of 1942 in the engineering and shipbuilding industries had been for the duration of the war only, though it was stated that "the question of any continuance beyond this point should be the subject of mutual discussion". In 1944 the employers had obtained postponement "until peace-time" of discussion on the unions' request for

* *Joint Production Committees in Great Britain* (I.L.O. Studies and Reports: Industrial Relations, No. 42), 1943. *British Joint Production Machinery* (I.L.O. Studies and Reports: Industrial Relations, No. 43), 1944.

† A.E.U. Inquiry into Production Committees, 1943.

‡ *Works Councils and Committees* (see also PLANNING, No. 189, issued by P E P).

§ Since September 1947 the Ministry of Labour has been responsible for maintaining records of J.P.C.s and will report progress from time to time to the National Joint Advisory Council.

amendment to the constitution, but when peace came no new agreement was reached. Similar failures were experienced in other industries, and in late 1946 and 1947 the unions sought the assistance of the Government in tripartite discussion on the National Production Advisory Council for Industry and the National Joint Advisory Council. After several of the Regional Boards had passed resolutions in favour of the re-establishment of J.P.C.s "to promote knowledge among workers on industrial and economic matters and to create co-operation between workers and management", and after the reference made to the importance of joint workplace consultation in two White Papers* and in various Working Party Reports, it was agreed by the N.J.A.C. in April 1947 that the T.U.C. and the B.E.C. should recommend to their constituent organisations that J.P.C.s should be established where they did not already exist, on the understanding that such machinery should be voluntary and advisory, that it should not deal with questions relating to terms and conditions of employment, and that each industry should decide through its normal negotiating arrangements on the form this workplace machinery was to take. The employers' representatives refused the Ministry of Labour's offer to draw up a model constitution, but it was agreed in July that the Ministry's Regional Industrial Relations Officers should be informed of constitutions agreed nationally and should be available to assist local associations and union branches to set up the machinery in particular places of work; they were, however, to take no action to assist unless agreement had first been reached nationally. Soon afterwards publicity to the Government's opinion supporting joint consultation was given in speeches by Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Morrison, and Sir Stafford Cripps.

Since the Government, the T.U.C., and the British Employers' Confederation all favour J.P.C.s, it is pertinent to inquire why progress towards establishing or re-establishing them has been so slow. On the trade union side must be appreciated the great difference between a resolution passed unanimously by a delegate conference and *the* resolution required to carry on negotiations for a national agreement and to get it applied in a myriad of workplaces at a time when officials are so fully occupied with a host of other pressing problems. There is, moreover, the conservatism of the rank and file, who are not necessarily eager for further responsibilities to be shouldered either by themselves or their representatives. Apart from this inertia, positive objections are put forward against J.P.C.s by some trade unionists who argue, for example, that as they are not on piece-work they would not gain by improved methods, that it is not their concern to put forward suggestions which will increase the bosses' profits, or who fear that, with present shortages of raw materials, improved processes might mean that they would work themselves out of a job. Although plenty of their colleagues could refute these arguments the objections remain. There are, of course, objections too, from employers, who may argue that their employees' first loyalty is not to the firm and that therefore facts and secrets cannot be shared with them. Others still stand by the concept of managerial prerogatives and claim that some workers' representatives have used J.P.C.s for debates on political matters or have wasted time on trivialities or in reopening questions on which national agreement has been reached. One significant reply to employers' qualms has been provided by the steel firm of Richard Thomas & Baldwin in their establishment at Pontardawe and elsewhere in South Wales, where not only is the principle of joint consultation pursued by the higher management with workers' representatives on J.P.C.s, but also vigorous attempts have been made to enlist the support and enthusiasm of all

* *Statement on Economic Considerations affecting relations between Employers and Workpeople* (Cmd. 7018), and *Economic Survey, 1947* (Cmd. 7046).

operatives.* Of longer duration, though on a smaller scale, are the J.P.C. of Messrs. Winget at Rochester and that firm's "Full Employment Council". These are only two examples of the successful application of the principle of consultation, and a good many others could be quoted.

Joint consultation in the nationalised industries

Objections of this sort should not carry so much weight in the nationalised industries. The nationalisation measures include only general provisions for consultation and do not attempt to prescribe detailed forms of machinery, which is left to develop on its own lines. For example, the relevant section (Section 46) of the Coal Industry Nationalisation Act, 1946, reads as follows:

"(1) It shall be the duty of the (National Coal) Board to enter into consultation *with organisations appearing to them to represent substantial proportions of the persons in the employment of the Board, or of any class of such persons,*[†] as to the Board's concluding with those organisations agreements providing for the establishment of joint machinery for

- (a) the settlement by negotiation of terms and conditions of employment, with provision for reference to arbitration in default of such settlement in such cases as may be determined by or under the agreements; and
- (b) consultation on
 - (i) questions relating to the safety, health or welfare of such persons;
 - (ii) the organisation and conduct of the operations in which such persons are employed and other matters of mutual interest to the Board and such persons arising out of the exercise and performance by the Board of their functions.

"(2) The Board shall deposit with the Minister and the Minister of Labour and National Service copies of any such agreement as aforesaid entered into by the Board and of any instrument varying the terms of any such agreement."

This may be compared with the corresponding section (Section 53) of the Electricity Act, 1947, which provides:

"(1) Except in so far as they are satisfied that adequate machinery exists for achieving the purposes of this section, it shall be the duty of the Central Authority to seek consultation with *any organisation appearing to them to be appropriate*[‡] with a view to the conclusion between the Authority and that organisation of such agreements as appear to the parties to be desirable with respect to the establishment and maintenance of machinery for

- (a) the settlement by negotiation of terms and conditions of employment, with provision for reference to arbitration in default of such settlement in such cases as may be determined by or under the agreements; and
- (b) . . . the discussion of other matters of mutual interest to the Board and such persons, including efficiency in the operation of the services of the Boards."

* *Why and How: A Study in Joint Consultation* (Mather & Crowther Ltd.).
Ingot News, a works newspaper issued by Richard Thomas & Baldwin.

† Our italics.

‡ Our italics.

Section 95 of the Transport Act, 1947, is, with minor differences of wording only, identical with the foregoing.

In each case the first duty laid upon the machinery set up is something which falls within the traditional scope of trade unionism, and which here receives statutory recognition. Sub-section (b) however, extends the functions of the machinery to a vastly wider field. As a result of the provisions of the Coal Industry Nationalisation Act a National Consultative Council for the industry was established in November 1946,* and additional consultative machinery has since been set up at divisional, area, and colliery levels. The model constitution for colliery consultative committees† provides for review of training facilities, accident and sickness trends and welfare arrangements, and for discussions on technical efficiency, including scrutiny of current and future development plans. Questions of discipline and promotion are not mentioned, although, of course, representations arising from what have been considered as unjust punishments or incorrect promotion will be made, but after the event. At the time of writing it is still too soon to say what form of consultative machinery will be developed in the other major nationalised industries.

* See p. 118 above.

† Colliery Consultative Committees are composed of the manager and three officials appointed by him (one of whom must be a surface official), a deputy, and six workmen's representatives elected by ballot. The six workmen consist of representatives of the five main grades, namely, two of the face workers and one each of underground haulage workers, surface workers, contract workers not employed at the face, and tradesmen. All candidates for election must be members of a union recognised in the industry as appropriate for the particular grade. In addition, the area agent and the lodge secretary of the union and an appropriate area official of the Board are regarded as *ex officio* members of the Committee.

III. FACTORS AFFECTING RELATIONS

The foregoing pages have been primarily descriptive of the machinery of relations on the job and of its development over a period of years; they have not been concerned with questions of principle nor with the numerous psychological factors which affect progress in the attempts now being made to draw the two sides of industry together. P E P has in a recent publication given consideration to some of the more important of these factors.* Several of the conclusions there reached have their bearing on the attitude of trade unions to the question, and it would be inappropriate to conclude the present study without reference to them.

The broad question of whether closer relations between the two sides of industry is desirable is one of wide policy, and the trade union point of view on it will be dealt with in the final study in this volume. Assuming that they are desirable, what, at factory or workshop level, are the factors which encourage or hamper their achievement? Why is it that in some cases managements and shop stewards can co-operate successfully, and in others act as perpetual irritants on each other? Or why is it that some joint committees between management and workers succeed in their object while others do not?

No single, simple answer can be given to any of these questions. Leaving aside cases where failure to achieve harmony can be blamed upon deliberate ill will on one side or the other, it is striking how little is known about the other reasons for success or failure. Failure is sometimes due to simple defects in machinery or to administrative errors which can easily be put right once they are diagnosed. But more often the factors that determine the state of relations are less tangible and more complex. Usually, indeed, they are primarily psychological in character and not purely dependent on the formal machinery which exists for maintaining contact between the two sides; many instances¹ could be found of workshops and factories where relations are kept at a high standard with little or no attention to the method by which this is brought about, as well as of others where the reverse is true.

This is not, of course, to say that there is no connection between the two; well-devised and efficient machinery will probably help to create a favourable psychological atmosphere in cases where this does not exist already. What form of machinery is most likely to succeed is not a new subject for study, but has during the last thirty years or more been discussed over and over again both within the trade union movement and outside it. It has generally come to be recognised, for reasons outlined earlier in this study, that though the trade union, based as it is on the branch, is the medium most suited for certain aspects of contact with the employers, the union branch needs to be supplemented by additional channels of communication at the place of work. Hence the shop steward, and hence, too, the various forms of machinery for joint consultation, participation in management or whatever name one wishes to give it.

The shop steward is, of course, a union official and his functions and powers are decided by the union. For reasons which do not concern us here, his two periods of

* *The Human Factor in Industry*, PLANNING, No. 279, March 1948.

greatest prominence have been periods when circumstances were abnormal; it is not yet possible to say how the conception of his duties will develop or alter in years to come, though it may be assumed that in all probability no very radical change will occur at least in the near future.

On the other hand, ideas on the subject of joint consultation are by no means so well defined, though obviously its form interests the trade union movement closely. Where consultation machinery is set up or projected the union is naturally and immediately concerned, especially in works where union membership is incomplete, with the composition of the joint body and the basis of representation of the workers. Next, it is concerned with the scope of the joint body, its powers to demand information and to take executive decisions. Thirdly—and this is often a difficult problem to solve—there arises the question of demarcation between the functions of the joint body and the traditional functions of the unions as part of the machinery of collective bargaining. And finally comes a host of secondary matters, often intangible and difficult of definition, which collectively amount to the one fundamental issue of whether or not consultation or participation in management really gives the worker a feeling of improved status. Not all of these questions can be settled by the unions, nor is opinion within the unions yet invariably clear on the ways in which they should be settled.

In practice, the method of selecting workers' representatives varies widely, and may be based upon the union branch, on the shop stewards' committee or on election by *ad hoc* meetings or ballots of workers. For obvious reasons most trade unionists wish to influence the selection of representatives as far as possible, and the nearer union membership approaches 100 per cent the greater their influence will be. It is, however, worth noting that quite frequently it is preferred that different individuals should represent the workers on the shop stewards' committee and on any joint committee dealing with managerial as opposed to trade union questions, or at least that the latter should be leavened by a certain number of representatives who are not shop stewards.*

On the second and third points, T.U.C. policy at least has been expressed, even though there may be some disagreement in other parts of the movement. Following discussions between the National Joint Advisory Council to the Ministry of Labour, the B.E.C. and the General Council of the T.U.C. early in 1947, an agreed statement laid down several guiding principles. Two of these are especially interesting, providing that joint production committees should be "purely voluntary and advisory in character" and that they "should not deal with questions relating to terms and conditions of employment which are normally dealt with through the ordinary machinery of joint negotiation".

With the first of the points raised here, that consultation should be voluntary, the general trend of feeling in the trade union movement would appear at present to be in agreement. Compulsion has its advocates, however. Thus at the 1947 Annual Congress a resolution was moved by the A.E.U. (supported by the N.U.V.B., A.E.S.D. and C.A.W.U.) advocating that "joint production committees representative of manual, non-manual and technical workers should be a statutory obligation on industry"; after Sir Joseph Hallsworth for the General Council had pointed out the dangers of setting up

* A difficulty which sometimes arises, but to which no solution can at present be suggested, is the variable quality of representatives from different parts of the same factory—as, for example, from the tool-room and assembly shop in an engineering works. All must be represented, but not all are equally experienced in trade union and industrial matters.

compulsory machinery in cases where it might be used as an alternative to trade unionism, the resolution was remitted to the General Council for further study.

On the second point, the inclusion of the word "advisory" has since been challenged by some sections of the movement. On the question of demarcation of function between the traditional machinery of negotiation and any new machinery that may be set up there is little divergence of view, for the simple reason that trade unions will not surrender any of their powers to bodies of whose effectiveness or permanence they are not yet fully confident.

There is a danger of confusion of thought on some of these questions. As the discussion of the A.E.U. resolution referred to showed, the value of the J.P.C. is widely admitted, and many trade unionists would like to see the scope of its work extended. But the chief reason for the existence of some of the traditional functions of the trade union is that in the past the workers had no voice in management. The purpose of the J.P.C., and even more of the more highly developed forms of consultation machinery which are found in some factories and are advocated for wider adoption, is to give the workers precisely such a voice. If they become effective they may well render some traditional aspects of trade union activity unnecessary while opening up immense new fields for action, and it may be found that the only way in which they can become effective is by taking over some functions from the unions. Questions of hours and wages cannot as a rule be settled by a joint committee, or indeed at factory level at all. But local working conditions, discipline, complaints, promotions—these are only a few of the matters which could perhaps be covered by joint committees without diminishing the power or value of the unions. On such matters as these policy within the movement is still not fully formulated.

Trade unionists will be more prepared to recognise the value of joint consultation and to contribute to it if they are satisfied in their minds that it will work effectively and over a wide field—if, in fact, it amounts to real participation in management. It is in the creation of this sort of confidence that psychological factors play so important a part.

The psychological aspects of management are now becoming more generally recognised as a field for scientific study. The P&E P broadsheet referred to above gave a brief description of work already done in this field and of steps now being taken officially to extend it. It is clear that the factors which make for good or bad relations between management and workers in day-to-day affairs of production are intensified when joint machinery of any sort is set up; hence investigation into the attitudes of one to the other and the reasons for them is of great value as a guide in setting up consultative committees and similar bodies. Broadly, as has been said earlier, the sum of these factors, as far as the trade unionist is concerned, is the question of status. To secure his co-operation he must be convinced that the management is really prepared to come some distance to meet him, that his advice will be taken when it warrants taking, that consultation is not being used as a means of weakening the unions—that, in short, the management is not "holding out on him". Nothing can be more harmful than the impression that the management regards consultation as a pretence or a formality and then goes away and takes its own decisions regardless of advice given. And nothing is more likely to assist the spread of consultation than proof that it really works when honestly tried.

It is inevitable that a system still in the experimental stage, and dependent as it is on large numbers of small detached units, should so far show an uneven record of success.

The number of J.P.C.s in existence is not in itself a guide to progress; although it shows a decline since the end of the war, it is probable that many of those which have ceased functioning were of little value in any case. What is important is that the idea of consultation has emerged from the second World War with more credit than its predecessor from the first. There is more possibility now than there was then of pointing to examples of committees which have really worked, and to use them as models for further development. Resistances there will be on both sides, but there is reason to hope that they will be broken down in time as the advantages of consultation become apparent.

TRADE UNIONS IN POST-WAR BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

The aims of trade unionism

"A Trade Union as we understand the term," wrote Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1902, "is a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their employment." These opening words of their *History of Trade Unionism* are followed a few pages later by a second definition: "The fundamental purpose of the Trade Union is the protection of the Standard of Life—that is to say, the organised resistance to any innovation likely to tend to the degradation of the wage-earners as a class."

Half a century later these definitions are still true. But they are no longer complete, if, indeed, they ever were. Compare them with a fresh definition given by the T.U.C. in 1944. Three main objectives are listed in their *Interim Report on Post-War Reconstruction*: "The first of these is unquestionably that of maintaining and improving wages, hours and conditions of labour. . . . Secondly, the Trade Union Movement is concerned with the opportunities which exist for the worker to obtain work. 'Full employment' is an aim which the Trade Unions have always pursued. . . . Thirdly, the Trade Union Movement exists to extend the influence of workpeople over the policies and purposes of industry and to arrange for their participation in its management."

The repeal in 1946 of the Trade Disputes Act of 1927 marked the end of a major phase of trade union activity—the struggle for recognition, which during the earlier days of the movement had been one of its chief preoccupations. From the fight against the Combination Acts through Tolpuddle, the triumph of 1871, the dock strike of 1889, Taff Vale, the Osborne judgment and the General Strike to the appointment of a prominent trade unionist as Minister of Labour in 1940, the aim of achieving recognition was steadily pursued. The victory is now virtually complete; in all save a very few sections of industry the right of the workers to combine for the protection and advancement of their common interests is established, both legally and in practice.

In a second field of activity victory has also been won, though its permanence may not be so certain. Unemployment is hated not only for the direct misery it causes, but also for its effectiveness as a weapon in the hands of employers who in the past have not scrupled to use it as a means of weakening the unions and of depressing the standard of wages and conditions. Since the second World War, full employment has become a declared object of national policy, and something on which neither the present Government nor any other dare go back without seriously endangering its position; in that sense victory over the fear of unemployment has been gained. Yet it is not certain that the consequences of victory are fully understood. Full employment without confidence that it will be permanently maintained may be not so much a blessing as a curse to the community and its economic well-being. It creates a host of problems—problems of distribution and mobility of labour, problems of administrative machinery, even the fundamental problem of whether it can be made permanently effective without infringements upon personal liberty—which did not arise in times of chronic unemployment. In the years to come much will depend on whether these questions are squarely faced and on whether

the conflicts which they involve can be satisfactorily resolved—not forgetting that a return to the old system of mass unemployment would pose vastly greater problems.

Neither recognition nor the abolition of unemployment is, however, an end in itself. They are steps towards the ultimate goal of raising and protecting standards of living in the widest sense, embracing both material well-being and the right to live freely in society, enjoying the privileges as well as performing the duties which society confers. Here victory can only be relative. Since the days of the early unions enormous advances have been made. Living standards have improved beyond recognition. But on the trade unions there still rests the primary duty of maintaining the ground won and advancing still further where possible. Whatever may be the new relationship of the trade union movement to the community and the State, whatever modifications may be required in its habits of mind and method as each advance is secured and the character of society changes, the dual function defined by the Webbs remains and will remain—offensively, to improve, defensively, to protect, the Standard of Life.

The methods of trade unionism

What has changed is not the purpose of trade unionism, but its methods. Organised labour is no longer a force in opposition to a social system controlled by and in the interests of the employing class; it is an integral part of a new social system. Trade unionists and their families account for a figure not far short of half the total population of the country. The political party founded and supported by the movement is in power as a majority Government. Trade unionists occupy many of the highest political and administrative posts. Such is the influence of the movement that its co-operation is now recognised as vital in the execution of the plans of the Government, and at every stage the Government is bound (as were its predecessors in two World Wars) to consult the unions on matters of industrial and social policy. The old methods of the strike and the lock-out, of “ca’canny” and of agitation and political opposition are in process of being replaced by negotiation and consultation on terms of equality with or even superiority to the employers. Instead of fighting against the political and economic machine, organised labour is now in a position to exert over the machine an ever-increasing degree of influence.

Political power

Influence takes a dual form—political influence over the Government and its policies, and direct influence over industry through the unions themselves. Before the first World War thought inside the movement on the question of control developed along two lines. “Workers’ control” meant to some (notably the syndicalists, as well as some earlier thinkers who had not reached a fully formulated syndicalist theory) the taking over by the workers of the actual means of production and its subsequent management in the interests of the workers. To most of this school of thought (which included such men as A. J. Cook, Tom Mann, and the advocates of industrial unionism on the lines of the N.U.R.) the political machine was of secondary importance to the industrial, and was expected either to be destroyed or to wither away, according to whether the particular brand of thought veered towards anarchism or Marxism. To others, however, and in time to the majority of the movement, control over the political machine was the immediate goal from which economic control was expected to follow. This section aimed therefore at the capture of the existing institutions of government by normal parliamen-

tary means, and through the medium of a political party designed to represent the interests of the workers; hence the foundation of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 and its conversion in 1906 into the Labour Party.

As the achievement of political power drew nearer, the concept of power changed. Revolutionary socialism (which, though never subscribed to by the whole or even the greater part of the movement, had in the past made a widespread appeal) became increasingly confined to a minority on the left. In its syndicalist form especially it received its death-blow in the *débat* of 1926. Interpretation of the experience of that year and of the two periods of minority government in 1924 and 1929-31 led the leadership of the movement to adopt a new approach to the role of trade unionism in a changing society. The attainment of political power remained an aim, but it ceased to be thought of as a means of setting up a "workers' State" in the old sense of a State in which the class of owners was suppressed once and for all. Especially it was realised that a "gradualist" form of socialism implied a fairly lengthy period of transition, and thought within the movement tended to be more and more devoted to the problems of this transitional period and its own functions during that time.

Control over industry

For these reasons the concept of control of industry within the framework of a society still mainly capitalist gained in relative importance, and it is here that the third objective of the T.U.C. *Interim Report* quoted above takes its place. Throughout this important statement of policy, control is differentiated from ownership. Nationalisation is to be applied to certain industries particularly adapted to it or particularly in need of it, but it is recognised that in the near future at least the greater part of the industry of the country will remain in private hands. A great deal of thinking has been done on the nature of the relationship between the trade union movement and industry, both in the nationalised and in the non-nationalised sectors. The new watchword is "industrial democracy", the old concept of direct control has yielded place to that of influence by persuasion and pressure and by participation in management; at the same time the State will be expected to compel privately owned industry to adapt its programmes to a central economic plan.

In the hope of securing its aims by such means, the trade union movement has surrendered some of its oldest objects. In their place it has accepted a new type of relationship with society and with the State which allows for argument about the precise degree of influence to be exercised and admitted, but not about the principle of influence. The purpose of this final study is to examine the policy and structure of the movement in the light of this new position—to ask in what direction its influence should be used, what changes in thought and methods are called for, and whether its structure and the functional relations of its parts are the best adapted to the role it is called upon to play. Rigidity of mind, slowness to adapt to new conditions much that is sanctified by tradition, could produce for the movement itself and for the whole community effects nothing short of disastrous. If, on the other hand, the movement is quick to grasp the implications of its new strength, it can make a contribution greater perhaps than that of any other section of society to the solution of the major economic and political problems of the day.

I. TRADE UNIONS AND GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC POLICY

The economic circumstances of the years immediately following the second World War have demanded, and still demand, that productivity in a wide field of industries should be raised to the highest possible level. External factors, such as worsening terms of trade, balance of payments difficulties, and shortages of essential raw materials, may in the not very distant future put a halt to increasing output, but for some years to come there is little likelihood of a slump due (as was said to be partly the case in the early 1930s) to the inability of the home market to consume. The trade union movement, accepting as it does the "consumptionist" argument referred to in an earlier study,* is even more fully committed to encouraging increased output than are some of its political opponents. Yet there survive from an earlier epoch a number of psychological obstacles to securing from each worker the highest output of which he is capable, and it is proving more difficult than was hoped to remove them.

Creating confidence

Two especially deserve mention. The first is the fear that to increase productivity by any means within the control of the worker—harder work, longer hours or weeks, refraining from restrictive practices—creates the risk of unemployment by "working oneself out of one's job". In the past, high productivity has too often meant precisely this for it to be possible to dismiss the idea as fanciful, and the key to its removal lies only in the creation of confidence that full employment can be and will be maintained as a permanent feature of national life. The second is the fear, equally justified by experience in the past, that high productivity merely means high profits for the boss without any corresponding gain, or a disproportionately small one, to the worker on the job; the key to the removal of this, too, is the creation of confidence in the will and ability of the Government to ensure that the product of industry is shared in a manner regarded as equitable.

The unions are, of course, in a position to have some degree of influence over Government policy, since with a Labour Government in power they have a close link with individual Ministers and Members of Parliament drawn from their ranks; but whatever the Government, they are too powerful a force to be ignored in the formulation of policy. The question of confidence offers less difficulty at the higher levels of union structure, since the leaders are able to judge accurately the extent to which the Government is acting on their advice or meeting their wishes. It is at the lower levels that the chief difficulty arises. The rank and file, the individual on the job, do not necessarily feel the Government to be much closer to them simply because it is a Labour Government, and do not understand the way in which the leadership of the movement influences policy; if they do not see immediate changes, they may even tend to accuse their leaders and the Labour Ministers of "selling out" and forsaking the class which they claim to represent. Government policy can still be—in fact, for the vast majority of trade unionists, still is

* See p. 82 above.

—something remote, laid down and executed by a distant central authority, and for most of the rank and file is not regarded as “their” policy.

The responsibility for this lack of confidence lies partly with the public relations of the Government, partly with the unions themselves. Since its election in 1945 the Labour Government has done much, often in circumstances of extreme difficulty, to protect the living standards of the lower income-groups by such means as controlling the cost of living through subsidies, concentrating on the building of working-class houses, and increasing and improving the social services. But the attention even of supporters of the Government tends to be focussed on what is still wrong rather than on what has been put right. As long as difficulties and shortages remain it is a part of human nature for trade unionists—as it is for any other section of the community—to feel that they are being called upon to bear a disproportionate share of inconvenience and hardship. Yet in spite of what has been achieved neither the Government nor the Labour Party has fully persuaded even all of their active supporters, let alone their opponents or the politically inactive, that the wage-earners as a class have since 1945 approached nearer to equality with other classes than at any time before. The consequence is that much of the old distrust is still very much alive and still hampers the execution of Government policy in the economic field.

Much of this distrust could be removed by the Government itself by means of improved public relations. The trade unions could, however, also help in their own sphere. The passing down to regional organisations and the branches of full and accurate information on current economic developments and Government policy is an educational task which at present receives too little attention and yet one which is quite proper to the functions of a trade union—and this is not to suggest that they should merely become mouthpieces of official propaganda. Further attention will be given later to this and other aspects of trade union education, but it should be remarked here that since the end of the war there have been several instances where difficulties or even open disputes have arisen which could have been solved or prevented altogether had the membership been better informed on the reasons behind the policy decisions of the Government and the higher levels of the trade union movement. It should also be remarked that educational work of this type, important as it is at any time, is of even greater importance when the Government of the day is one to which the movement as a whole has pledged its support.

Strikes and restrictive practices

The effects of continued distrust can be extremely serious, especially in so far as it is expressed in strikes and restrictive practices in all their forms. These have in the past been part of the workers’ armoury of defence and offence, and have in large measure been adopted as a protection against unemployment. At a time, however, when the interest of the whole community demands the raising of all types of essential production to the highest possible level, anything which impedes the process is obviously harmful.

It would be wrong, however, to overestimate the extent to which these practices are indulged in. By comparison with the years immediately following the first World War, a satisfactory feature of the present period is the comparative infrequency of strikes and stoppages; whereas in three years from November 11, 1918, 150 million working days were lost through industrial disputes, in the corresponding period from May 8, 1945, the total of days lost was only seven million. The reasons for this lower figure are complex, and consist partly of the greatly improved methods of demobilisation of the Forces and

the conversion of industry from war to peace, partly of the fact that Government policy as a whole has been nearer to the trade union point of view. But to a large extent the improvement is due to conscious restraint on the part of the unions. Although the end of the second World War left them in a position of unparalleled strength, they have deliberately refrained from exploiting their strength to the full in pressing for higher wages, shorter hours or improved conditions, and the period of conversion has so far been free from major strikes such as occurred in 1921.

The effect of what are commonly termed "restrictive practices" is more difficult to estimate, partly because the term itself cannot be so easily defined. Yet here again the unions have shown themselves willing to refrain from exploiting their full strength. During the war a number of unions agreed to the temporary suspension of many such practices. In 1942 there was passed the Restoration of Pre-war Trade Practices Act requiring employers to permit the restoration of the practices suspended within two months of the official end of the war. Late in 1945 the General Council of the T.U.C. agreed to the deferment of the date of restoration till December 31, 1947, and before this date was reached a further agreement was entered into postponing the date till December 31, 1948. More recently still (April 1948) the Government arranged for review by the National Joint Advisory Council to the Ministry of Labour of the general question of restrictive practices. There is a fairly general readiness to admit that not all of the practices for which there was a need in former times are appropriate in conditions of full employment, though obviously the trade union movement will insist on adequate safeguards before it agrees to their permanent abolition.

Wages

The connection between Government and trade union policy is especially close in relation to questions of wages and the cost of living. Even since the end of the war, wage rates have risen well above their highest wartime level, though the rise in actual earnings has for various reasons been less and improvements in real wages have been largely cancelled out by the increase in prices. There has been some modification of comparative wage levels in favour of industries such as mining, textiles and agriculture to which it was desired to attract labour. Both of these processes have gone on within the normal framework of collective bargaining. Since early in 1947 the Government has, however, felt itself obliged to discourage upward movements in order to counter the tendency to inflation, and in an earlier study the more recent developments of Government policy and of the attitude of the unions towards it have been briefly described.*

As long as the present distribution of the national income, or something like it, is maintained, the only way in which increases in real wages can be secured is by increased production and a generally rising standard of living. There are at present numerous external factors limiting the extent to which the standard of living of the whole country can rise; it may be found, should these factors become more unfavourable, that even the present standard cannot be maintained. At the same time most sections of society, and especially those in the lower income-groups, regard themselves as entitled to higher standards. The attitude of the trade unions is based fundamentally on two principles: firstly that production should wherever possible be increased by every available method, and secondly that whether or not increased production is possible the standard of living of the wage-earners should be improved at the expense of other sections—by altering,

* See p. 86 above.

that is, the "remarkably stable" ratio between wages and the other components of the national income referred to earlier. *

The trade union movement therefore tends to adopt the view that the unions, while appreciating the need to avoid inflationary increases, cannot be expected to withhold claims for higher wages unless the cost of living is stabilised and profits are also effectively controlled—an argument clearly set out in the T.U.C.'s *Interim Report on the Economic Situation* in January 1948. Reference has been made earlier to the bearing of price and profit control on the rationalisation of wages.* It is sufficiently clear that unless the feeling can be created that effective steps are being taken to control profits and the cost of living, the upward movement of wages cannot be checked by Government action without incurring the risk of serious industrial trouble.

The unions will not permit the supersession of collective bargaining by any other machinery of wage fixing, since they feel that the established system has justified itself by its results; on the other hand, the Government has not in any of its statements proposed that the existing machinery should be superseded. But the inconsistencies which exist in parts of the existing pattern of wages are generally admitted, just as the T.U.C. has admitted the undesirability of allowing wage increases to go on unchecked. Some further modification of attitude is still required, however, if either the rationalisation of the structure is to be achieved or the overall level is to be effectively related to the economic capacity of the country. If the Government is responsible for maintaining control of prices and profits on the one side, on the other there rests a responsibility no less grave on the trade union movement to see that neither objective is defeated by unreasonableness on the part of any of its components. But as has been said earlier, if effective co-operation between the Government and the movement is to be possible, it can only be on the basis of a general economic policy understood by and acceptable to the movement as a whole.

* Ibid.

II. TRADE UNIONS AND FULL EMPLOYMENT

The question of wages is closely linked with another of immediate moment—that of the attitude of organised labour to full employment in practice and with particular reference to the problem of labour mobility.

The distribution of labour

Previously, mobility was secured by the maintenance of a pool of unemployed who could be drawn upon whenever a particular type of demand increased, and to which surplus workers could be relegated. The acceptance of full employment as a policy renders any return to this system impossible. Yet in conditions of full employment the demand for labour will not be completely static as between industries and areas, though it may be subject to less variation than heretofore; if full employment means rigidity of economic structure, it may well defeat its own end. Some means must be found of attracting labour to the points where it is most needed, without at the same time causing more than the minimum of frictional unemployment and without, if possible, having recourse to measures restricting personal liberties.

Direction of labour, accepted during the war and accepted again in a limited form in the autumn of 1947 in order to meet an especially critical situation, is nevertheless undesirable as a permanent institution. A second set of methods, already used as a means of attracting labour into coalmining and some other industries, and often advocated for more general use, concerns the use of wage differentials* and other types of inducement to draw labour towards the undermanned industries; as has been seen earlier, methods of this sort are not completely effective and may create difficulties as great as those they solve.

The offering of inducements to enter or transfer to undermanned industries must obviously play its part in securing mobility of labour, but something further is needed. In principle, full employment means that a worker who becomes redundant in whatever job he happens to have been doing need not fear that he will not be able to get another one. But full employment does not necessarily mean the same thing to a trade unionist doing a particular job as it does to an economist. It is unfortunate that much of the thinking and writing on the subject assumes labour to be a more fluid commodity than in fact it is; inadequate allowance is sometimes made for the powerful factors which make a man want to stay in a job he knows with workmates he knows, and above all in the district which he regards as his home. The difficulty of redundancy and its consequences has already been clearly illustrated by episodes such as the Clydeside dock strike early in 1947. Although apart from a small and probably irreducible amount of frictional unemployment full employment is now a fact, it is of very little comfort to a dock worker dismissed as redundant in Glasgow to be told that there are vacancies for miners in Glamorgan. Yet if full employment is to be maintained in a non-rigid framework, problems of this sort are bound occasionally to arise.

“The right to work,” wrote the T.U.C. in 1944, “which the Trade Unions have sought to establish, is not merely a claim for a job of any kind. We are concerned to

* For a discussion of wage differentials, see pp. 84-87, above.

ensure that every worker shall be able, within limits determined only by the need to safeguard the reasonable freedom of others, to choose freely work which he prefers and for which he is trained at rates of wages and in conditions commensurate with his skill and the nature of the work.”* The difficulties which have arisen during the transitional period will in all probability diminish as industry begins to assume the pattern dictated by post-war needs. But at any time the fulfilment of the conditions laid down by the T.U.C.—to which they might well have added the condition that a worker should not be expected to move away from his home area unless there are very strong reasons for doing so—might well be regarded as beyond the bounds of possibility, since they do not take fully into account some of the difficulties which are bound to arise if, for example, technical advance reduces or eliminates the need for certain types of skill. Their fulfilment would in any case demand very careful regulation of the rate of entry to various industries in order not to deprive the essential industries of the manpower they need, planning of the location of industry, and a revision both of the present wages structure and of conditions of work, so that industries with a continuing high need for labour are not less attractive than others.

Yet even the partial fulfilment of these conditions—and the trade union movement itself has a contribution to make at least to the first and third—will go some distance towards securing mobility. There still remain the powerful deterrents of habit and preference for a familiar environment which can only partly be overcome by planning the location of industry; these deterrents are for the most part intangible and difficult of definition, and constitute one of the chief problems arising from full employment which call for more thorough investigation.

Redundancy

Apart from these, however, a great deal will depend on confidence in the reality and permanence of full employment. Here trade union co-operation is essential. Cases are bound to occur, even after the transitional period, in which workers will become redundant in a particular job or district. The old method of dealing with redundancy was by the simple expedient of dismissal, leaving those dismissed to find new jobs as best they could. Even since the war the same has been done on occasion, and the mere fact that other jobs of a different kind and possibly in a different district are available has not overcome the difficulties and the resentment which have arisen.

Several changes in practice would appear to be necessary. Firstly, the unions (or perhaps J.P.C.s where they exist, though there are obstacles to this course) must be taken into the confidence of the employer, must be satisfied that reductions in numbers employed are really necessary and do not depend merely on the whim of the employer or manager, and must be given a say in deciding which individuals are to be moved.† Secondly, as long notice as possible should be given before dismissal takes place, and efforts made by the employers in conjunction with the unions and the Ministry of Labour to find suitable alternative employment. Thirdly, the unions might find it to their advantage to be less insistent on strict demarcation between jobs, so that in cases where seasonal or other

* *Interim Report on Post-War Reconstruction*, p. 7.

† The method often adopted at present, based on the principle “last in, first out”, is open to serious objection. Especially in cases where workers may have to move to another district to find work, other considerations such as family responsibilities, age, length of residence, health and many more are important. Any rule-of-thumb method of selection is liable to cause hardship, and it is essential that each individual case be treated on its merits.

short-term fluctuations occur, continuity of employment could be secured by switching workers to other types of job should there be a temporary lessening in the volume of work available in their normal occupation.

Whatever system of dealing with the problems of redundancy and transfer is devised, its smooth working will be both dependent on and a condition of confidence. Confidence that full employment means what it says cannot be created overnight. But the unions can play an important part in encouraging its growth—and in this special field, as well as in relation to economic policy generally, their educational functions are of prime significance. Full employment is, of necessity, a long-term concept, and whether it can be maintained depends on external factors outside the control of the Government as well as on Government policy—and the Economic Survey for 1948 envisages a limited increase in unemployment due to these very factors. Yet even allowing for deterioration in this field, there is still an important difference between the pre-war situation and that which exists today, namely that the Government is committed to use all the planning resources in its power, both industrial and financial, to maintain the highest level of employment possible in whatever circumstances may arise. The form of confidence which it is essential to create is dual in character—firstly, that the Government actually possesses the means to implement a large part if not the whole of its employment policy; secondly, that whatever happens the Government will use its powers and that the level of employment will no longer be dependent on the fluctuations of an unplanned economy. Perhaps the greatest contribution that the unions can make is therefore to explain to their membership what these powers are and how they can be used—to explain, in a word, the mechanism of full employment.

The “closed shop”

A final aspect of a policy of full employment is the impetus which it gives to the movement towards securing full union membership within the industrial unit—the “closed shop” in the current if inaccurate English sense of the term. Trade unions have always aimed at 100 per cent membership. The reason why it has not usually been attained in the past has been simply the weakness of the unions in conditions of mass unemployment, with all the possibilities of victimisation and employment of non-union labour which it creates. These limiting factors removed, it may be expected that full union membership will in time become a matter of general application. In the long run it is probably to the advantage of the employers that their workers should speak through their union representatives, especially if the principle of joint consultation in management is to be extended.

The unions have a duty to ensure that full trade union membership does not imply excessive rigidity; a certain amount of flexibility in demarcation is needed. It is also necessary to distinguish between cases where the imposition of the rule is practical and those where it is not; to seek to coerce a substantial number of unwilling workers into a union is not the best way of achieving the desired end. On the other hand, there is considerable justification for the argument of the unions that in a case where membership is almost complete, the achievement of full membership should not be held up by one or two individuals whose wages and conditions of work are, in spite of their refusal to join a union, governed by collective agreements made by the union on behalf of all workers. In this connection remark should be made on the ruling given by the Minister of Labour in October 1947 to the effect that a person cannot be directed under the Control of

Engagements Order, 1947, to a factory where trade union membership is a condition of employment unless he is willing to join the appropriate trade union—so that, in effect, an unscrupulous person can defeat the purpose of the Order by expressing a conscientious or other objection which he may not really hold.

Full employment and union structure

Full employment and full union membership within the shop make for a much greater concentration of trade union forces than has hitherto been possible. The movement towards centralisation and reduction of the number of unions, visible for the last quarter century or more, is still in progress and will in all probability be encouraged by present conditions. It may be asked whether the present complexity of structure, with all its potentialities for clashes of interest between unions, disputes over demarcation, divided counsels, and the ever-present danger of sectionalism in approach is well adapted to the new circumstances of the movement as a whole. These questions of the internal organisation of the movement are, however, of such importance that they deserve a section to themselves. Meanwhile two other aspects of policy must be briefly referred to.

III. TRADE UNIONS AND NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES

The old syndicalist idea of direct workers' control of industry began to lose ground within the trade union movement after the first World War, and a new direction of thought was indicated in the report of the General Council of the T.U.C. to Congress in 1932. Current thought differentiates between public ownership and public control, and envisages the latter as possible within a framework of private ownership.

There has also been a change of outlook on the method of nationalisation. Since 1932 official T.U.C. policy has favoured the setting up for each industry of public corporations on lines broadly similar to those which have in practice been adopted. The relations of the national boards so far set up with their employees and the public are not widely different from those of a large private concern.

The constitution of the national boards

In spite of the fundamental differences deriving from public ownership and Ministerial responsibility for the broad outlines of policy in the nationalised industries, there is in some sections of the trade union movement a feeling of disappointment that the differences are not greater still. The national board is a distant authority which does not create the feeling that the industry it covers now belongs to "us" as opposed to "them". Of necessity many of the pre-nationalisation managerial staffs have been retained, and it has not been possible all at once to readjust the relations of management and workers. There has also been much criticism of the composition of the boards. Trade unionists have argued that more of their own members should have been appointed, and many have remained unconvinced by the answer of the Government that management is a highly skilled job which few workers have the training and experience to undertake. Yet there has also been a contradictory tendency, in cases where leading trade unionists have been appointed to serve on national boards, to complain that they are being stolen from the movement and have placed their personal ambition above their loyalty to their friends.

When a man with a background of trade union experience is appointed to a national board, his position is in many ways difficult. By training and by personal inclination he is in sympathy with the outlook of the unions and he looks at his new task from the workers' point of view—and, indeed, it has been a matter of deliberate policy to include in the composition of the boards a certain proportion of members who will do precisely that. Constitutionally, however, he holds office in a purely personal capacity. He is not in any sense a representative of the union, he receives no instructions from it, and his acts as a member of the board do not bind the union in any way.* Yet unofficially both the men appointed and the unions from which they were drawn tend to regard their presence on the board as tantamount to representation, even though it confers on the union no power of control.

* For an account of the T.U.C.'s attitude to the constitutional question, see p. 117 above.

His position may be compared to that of a trade unionist elected to Parliament, or even more to one holding Government office, and he is liable to become subject to the same conflict of loyalties. His membership of the board commits him to its policy and decisions, even though his sympathies may be more strongly with the unions. Should a dispute arise, and should it develop to the point of defiance by the union of a board decision, the union will feel that he has let them down and he will feel himself let down by his friends; his sense of isolation will in such a case be enormously increased.

Relations with the boards

Thus even the fact that the boards include members sympathetic to them does not solve the problem of the relations between the unions and the boards. Many trade unionists consequently press for direct union representation and for closer control by Parliament over matters of day-to-day administration, but they do not work out the full implications of their demands. It may be that some of the appointments which have been made have not been such as to inspire the unions with confidence, but that is not the real problem. There is something much more fundamental. Some of the industries which have been nationalised had in the past bad records of industrial relations, though in others the opposite was true. In either case, however, the attitudes of the past have not been swept away by the mere act of nationalisation; a gap still exists, and it may be that it can only be closed by a gradual process of growing together. As more men with a trade union background are trained to fill managerial positions, as the system of joint consultation (for which, after all, public ownership offers unique opportunities) widens and develops, there is every reason to hope that the strains and tensions which survive from the past will be eliminated. But to imagine that so complex a problem of attitudes can be solved by a stroke of the pen in Whitehall is futile.

The formal machinery of consultation and negotiation between the boards and the workers has been described earlier*; it will be seen to differ little in principle from machinery which exists in non-nationalised industries. In spite of the existence of this machinery and its full official recognition, there is in the present stage of development of nationalised industry no particular reason why disputes should be any less frequent or any different in character from those which occur elsewhere. Even if the composition of the boards and their managerial methods were perfect—and no one will suggest that they are—it would still be impossible to carry out the reorganisation which nationalisation entails without strains appearing at some point or other. Disputes will arise in such cases. But in view of the closeness of the connection between these industries and public policy, as well as the fact that several of them are industries or services of prime importance to the whole economic life of the country, there is a plain obligation to restrict the area affected by disputes when they arise and to reach a solution as quickly as possible. It is essential that the means for dealing with local difficulties should be as flexible as possible, so that they can be quickly treated on a local basis without spreading into wider disputes—an obvious task for joint consultation machinery.

Wages in the nationalised industries

Trade union policy must be devised in the light of certain governing factors. First, there is the question of wages. Rightly or wrongly the system of nationalisation so far adopted is based on the assumption that each industry under public ownership must pay its way. The unions cannot aim at squeezing profits, since there are no profits in the

* See pp. 118 and 139 above.

ordinary sense, and the rate of interest paid on nationalisation stocks is fixed by Parliament. Wages must therefore be met out of revenue, or else by running the industry at a loss and making good the deficit from subsidies. In cases such as coal, electricity or transport, the price of the commodity or service supplied has a direct influence on price levels as a whole; therefore a financial structure must be developed which takes into account not only the need to pay a proper wage to the workers, but also the need to keep production costs (including wages) at a level which will not place an unduly large burden on the shoulders of the consumers. The unions are bound, therefore, when pressing a wage claim to take into consideration the capacity of the industry—and ultimately of the public—to pay; while they have a right to demand that the other costs of production should be kept within economical limits, they also have the duty not to try to force wages to a level which would involve the public in the payment of unreasonably high prices. In passing, however, it should be remarked with reference to nationalised industries in general that rather than continue the payment of the low wages which have been customary in some sectors of the industries taken over, and rather than pass on all increases in costs to the consumer, it might be better for those industries to run at a loss even for a period of years—which, after all, would not be the financial disaster it is sometimes assumed to be.

Hours and conditions

Hours of work and conditions supply the other two most obvious sources of dispute. A nationalised industry may fairly be expected not to fall behind the standards set by others. Nationalisation has, however, meant in several cases the taking over of industries with bad records, and the process of conversion and improvement necessarily takes time. Few trade unionists would claim more than that publicly owned industries should set an example of standards which can be followed by any industry. If the responsible boards can satisfy their workers that an attempt is being made to reach these standards without unreasonable delay, and if they are prepared to eliminate the more obvious abuses with a speed which suggests that they mean business, there is no reason why they should not secure the co-operation of the unions; the unions on their side would be on stronger ground in urging restraint on their members if this broad confidence in the intentions of the boards were once established.

In one important respect a publicly owned industry is more favourably placed than many others for preventing or limiting disputes, namely that it should be easier both for the unions to secure full recognition and for the two sides to find common ground on which to meet. "A constant recurrence of strikes in a nationalised industry," said the Assistant General Secretary of the T.U.C. early in 1947, "would be a proof of failure on the part of the management and the unions of that nationalised industry. Because one of the lesser but important objects of nationalisation is to enable workers and management to hear each other's point of view and to arrive at agreement without resort to a strike or lock-out."*

The lack of precedent

In defining the relationship of the unions to the boards in a situation which is almost entirely new, there is no precedent to go on. Of those services which before 1945 were publicly owned, only the Post Office was of a size comparable to the coalmining industry or the railways, and legally its employees are a part of the Civil Service. Others ranged

* Mr. George Woodcock, in a broadcast on January 18, 1947.

from the B.B.C., where many grades were covered by an internal staff association, to the naval dockyards and the Metropolitan Water Board, whose employees were free to join any appropriate trade union. Neither in these nor in the case of municipally owned services was the relationship comparable to that which obtains in a nationalised industry, for apart from their smaller scale (and the consequently limited inconvenience which would be caused by a breakdown of relations) the authorities responsible for them were more tangible than a national board and there was really little difference between them and a private firm.

What gives the nationalised industries their special character is their universality. In present conditions a strike or disturbance anywhere affects the whole community. Nationalised industries occupy a special position not because they are nationalised, but because they are key industries; any interruption of the supply of goods and services which they provide is immediately felt throughout the whole economy. It is in the light of this that their relationship with the trade union movement must be developed. The Government, the national boards, and the unions share between them the responsibility for making them work as efficiently, as economically, and at the same time as humanly as possible.

IV. TRADE UNIONS AND PRIVATE EMPLOYERS

Even after the completion of the Government's programme of nationalisation, some 80 per cent of the industry of Britain will still be in private hands. The state of labour relations in private industry will thus continue to affect profoundly the economic health of the country.

Fundamental to any inquiry into the attitudes of employers and workers is the fact that, however much their relative strength may have changed and the State become interested in their dealings with each other, the basic character of their relationship has not altered. Despite the awareness of both sides of the need for increasing productivity, the antagonisms of an earlier age are still there in latent form, even though temporarily obscured by national necessity; the clashes of the past and the distrust which they bred are too recent to be so soon forgotten. There is in industry today many a man well under middle age who can remember only too clearly the low wages, the mass dismissals in the name of rationalisation, and the prolonged unemployment of the decade before the war.

It must be appreciated from the start that, in view of their past experience, for the unions to refrain from taking full advantage of their new strength presupposes very deliberate restraint on their part. Increased productivity depends in the long run on the confidence of the unions that it will not merely increase profits. Moderation in pressing wage claims depends on confidence that profits are not abnormally high. Few trade unionists want to hamper the Government's economic programme and the recovery of the country. But if they are to make their full contribution they will demand that the difficulties and discomforts of the situation should be shared in a manner which they regard as equitable—and in present conditions they are strong enough to enforce their demand.

The changing basis of negotiation

The devising of an economic and political policy which will create confidence on these issues is primarily the affair of the Government; here we are more concerned with relations between the unions and the employers as such, though they cannot be considered except in the light of general policy. There is a qualitative difference between relations in the single firm or factory and relations between the economic classes of "employers" and "workers". In the individual case relations range from the very good to the very bad largely according to specific factors such as managerial policy and the character of the personalities most closely concerned. Between economic classes they depend to a large extent on political as well as economic factors, which fall within the competence of the Government. But in recent years the gradual supersession of local agreements by collective bargaining on a national scale, the concentration of both trade unions and employers' organisations into universally competent bodies, and the more and more frequent intervention of the Government in matters which only a few years ago would have been the subject of local negotiations, have all helped to broaden the basis of contact and to assimilate special cases into the general. From the trade union viewpoint the credit side of this process includes the vast strengthening of the unions in all their dealings with employers, and especially in cases where particular groups of workers would other-

wise be in a weak position in facing a bad employer. On the debit side, however, is the chance that a local dispute capable of a speedy local solution may become magnified out of all proportion. Also on the debit side is the greater danger that, while the negotiators are concerned with wide matters of policy, what happens in the individual workshop may escape notice. The machine on both sides may become too rigid, broad decisions may be taken which cannot be easily adapted to local conditions, and between the centre and the outlying parts of the trade union structure a gap may develop—a danger which will have to be examined more fully in the next section.

Controlling private industry

Ideas on the functions and duties of private industry have in recent years changed substantially; so have ideas on its future. Official trade union thought—though perhaps not that of the left wing of the movement—now accepts the continuance, at least for some time, of a large part of industry in private hands. Whereas in the past full public ownership was often felt to be the only means of achieving control, attention has more recently been paid to methods by which public control can be secured while the industries concerned remain in private hands. Moreover, there are now schemes under consideration designed to bring into being what is generally called “industrial democracy” in both publicly and privately owned industry; this is, of course, one of the means by which private industry can be controlled in the public interest.

In the *Interim Report on Post-War Reconstruction* referred to earlier, the T.U.C. made suggestions as to the manner in which public control could be secured; they include on the one side the regulation by the Government of supplies of raw materials and State-provided services (including those provided by the nationalised industries) and of interest rates, etc., and on the other the establishment at various levels of joint boards of employers and workers charged with the execution of many of the normal functions of management. Later still the Labour Party developed this second aspect, and in a pamphlet issued in January 1948* recommended the whole question of “industrial democracy” as one for study by the membership of the party.

“Industrial democracy”

Although proposals of this type are not a new departure for the Labour movement, interest in them has become more widespread since the end of the war. But it is not certain how far they will meet with the approval of the rank and file. In quite recent times, and especially after the failure of the numerous experiments in consultation carried out after the first World War, there was a marked tendency to distrust proposals for “workers’ participation in management” and to regard them as a device to muzzle the unions; it was widely believed that, however perfect the machinery, the owners would still decide policy by themselves and in their own interests, and consultation would be only a pretence. Later, however, opinion in favour of participation under suitable guarantees increased, and experience during the second World War encouraged its growth. Many employers were also moving in the same direction, and it is interesting to observe, on comparing the Labour Party’s *Industrial Democracy* with the rather earlier *Industrial Charter* of the Conservative Party, that on paper at least the difference between them does not seem unbridgeable.

Industrial Democracy (No. 1 of series *Towards Tomorrow*).

To say that, however, does not dispose of the fears of a large section of the trade union movement; in fact, the very nearness of the two documents increases distrust. To most trade unionists, participation in management is worse than useless if it does not imply a real measure of consultation in matters of policy, such as costs, programmes, production difficulties, conditions of employment, and labour questions generally, including numbers employed and methods of promotion. Full information must be available if these demands are to be met; the company's books must be available for inspection, and the company must be prepared to supply to the workers' representatives full particulars of overhead costs, programmes, orders, and markets, as well as of manufacturing processes which it may for other reasons be desired to conceal. Of no less importance is the question of training for promotion to the higher grades of management. Officially sponsored schemes for training within industry, such as the job relations courses run by the Ministry of Labour, help a great deal, though there is room for their expansion to cover wider fields of study. There are also certain psychological obstacles to their full effectiveness (such as the feeling that they train workers to become "bosses' men"), but in time these will diminish. Not by any means all employers are prepared to take their employees as fully into their confidence as the unions demand they should, but it is clear that unless mutual confidence is created no project for the democratisation of industry can ever become more than a pretence.

Profit sharing

Another, though closely related, question is the attitude of the unions to profit sharing and similar schemes. Profit sharing in one form or another is by no means new; it has, for example, been the practice of most privately owned gas undertakings since long before the first World War, and has also been introduced in many other sections of industry. Yet it cannot be said that experience of it has been entirely happy. Union members have often regarded these schemes as a means whereby the employers can secure a tighter control over their workers, limiting their freedom of movement, preventing increases in wages and compelling them to work harder without passing on to them the full benefit of their extra effort. It is argued, too, that even in cases where firms operating profit sharing schemes have been able to point to a good record of labour relations, this is due in part at least to fear on the workers' side that their savings will be lost or reduced if they show themselves too militant. Fears of this last sort have probably seldom been justified, but they exist as a psychological fact and cannot be ignored.

The T.U.C. has not recently expressed any opinion on profit sharing, but leaves it to be assumed that its attitude is unfavourable; the issue is not in any case regarded as a live one. Generally speaking, trade unionists prefer all forms of payment to workers to be confined to the broad heading of wages (including, of course, bonuses and other supplementary payments), as these can be more effectively controlled by the normal machinery of collective bargaining.

Wages in private industry

These are, however, questions of policy and are not directly concerned with current relations between employers and workers. Here the principal determining factors are wages and security of employment—factors which return us to two of the three objectives of trade unionism defined by the T.U.C. and quoted earlier. A feature of both since the war has been that they have to a large extent been taken out of the control of the

employer. In most industries, or at least in those where price control has been in operation, wage increases have been possible without affecting profits, since the additional cost to the employer could be passed on to the consumer with official approval. Similarly, apart from a few local instances and the regular minimum of frictional unemployment, the demand for goods has been so high that full employment has been maintained without conscious effort. There is no guarantee that either of these conditions will be permanently fulfilled. Recent changes in the attitude of the Government to wages have been described earlier; their effect is to discourage wage increases from being passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices, even though the "cost plus" principle has been extended under some recent price fixing orders. Wage increases will now normally be favoured by the Government only if they follow increases in output—though presumably the Government is unlikely to interfere in cases where the unions succeed in gaining an increase at the expense of profits.

Employment

The second point, the question of full employment, has already been covered earlier in this study. But until complete confidence in its permanence is created, employment will continue to be an important aspect of relations between employers and workers. Up to 1939, security of individual employment was affected by employers' policy in a host of ways, from the threat of dismissal of an individual regarded as "troublesome" to the deprivation of whole communities of their livelihood, as in the case of Jarrow under the "rationalisation" of shipbuilding. Government influence on the conditions in which industry operates, through its fiscal policy and through measures affecting both organisation and location, can probably prevent a repetition of the Jarrow episode; at the other end of the scale present-day trade union strength prevents most forms of victimisation or unwarranted dismissal. But between the two lies a wide field in which, once the immediate post-war demand for goods slackens, the employer is still in control. For reasons which we have seen earlier, the trade unions are vitally interested in the question of labour distribution and redundancy. Flexibility of labour distribution does, in fact, depend to a considerable extent on the degree of confidence in full employment. Without confidence it could easily happen that the pre-war instability of work and livelihood might again reappear to poison the relations of the two sides of industry and to create between the Government and the trade union movement a breach wide enough to destroy the basis of their present co-operation.

The question of compulsory powers

A final question to be asked, though one over which the trade unions have not direct control, is the extent to which the Government should use compulsory powers in matters of relations between private employers and their workers. In the earlier studies in this volume it has been seen that the general opinion is against compulsion. Hours of labour, for example, are controlled by law only for women and children and a very few categories of male workers. Even in such matters as arbitration and the establishment of joint consultation machinery at all its levels, the tendency has been for the Government to encourage and empower rather than to compel. It may be argued that the bad employer should be forced to observe a code of conduct which others have adopted voluntarily; equally it could be argued that trade unionists who do not show themselves reasonably co-operative should be placed under a legal obligation to conform. But it has generally been found by experience that willing co-operation cannot be enforced by

law; unwilling co-operation is almost a contradiction in terms and is usually valueless. Nevertheless, the Government, while stopping short of compulsive measures, can and should use its influence with both employers and trade unions to urge them to refrain from provocative behaviour and to settle by consultation questions which need never become the source of disputes.

In the case of collective bargaining over wages and conditions of work, the T.U.C. has made it abundantly clear that it would resist any external influence; in the White Paper on *Personal Incomes, Costs and Prices* referred to above, the Government has also disclaimed any intention to interfere as long as the machinery is used in the public interest. A substantial section of the trade union movement, however, while opposing the compulsory regulation of wages, advocates that profits should be placed under stricter official control, though it is not made clear how they intend this to be done. The size and influence of this body of opinion will depend very largely on the effectiveness of the Government's appeal for a voluntary limitation of profits. If this, in conjunction with current steps to control prices, is found inadequate to prevent the making of very large profits in certain industries, trade union advocacy of compulsory restriction will become more widespread, and it will also become more difficult to persuade the unions not to press for wage increases.

If "industrial democracy" is to become a reality, however, it is doubtful if mere encouragement is enough. Ultimately the recalcitrant employer will probably have to be compelled, for example, to disclose to all members of J.P.C.'s and similar bodies the information without which they cannot function. The time for compulsion has perhaps not yet come, and there is still room for persuasion to accept the full implications of consultation. Voluntary co-operation, even if it takes some time to achieve, will be more effective than orders to set up consultative machinery without the will to make the machine work; probably the greater part of industry by means of moral pressure can be persuaded to develop a more democratic structure. But the fears of many trade unionists that "industrial democracy" does not mean what it says will be dispelled only when they are satisfied that no one on the other side is being allowed to evade his responsibilities; if *their* willing co-operation is to be secured, the Government might find it advisable to have at least in the background some form of sanction against the employer who does not play his part.

V. TRADE UNION STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

The foregoing sections have touched on certain current questions and the attitude, actual or desirable, of the trade union movement towards them. The final question to be asked concerns the internal working of the movement itself; in view of its new position and new strength, are its structure and its concept of the functions of its various parts the best adapted to present conditions, or do they stand in need of conscious modification?

The co-ordination of union activities

In recent years the highly diversified structure of the movement has been slowly tending towards simplification. Small local unions have grouped together, small craft unions have sometimes combined into larger units, and in some cases even major unions have joined forces in federations which are gradually bringing the forces of labour inside whole industries under a unified command. Slow though it be, the trend is away from the small union of members of a single craft towards larger unions catering for different crafts and skills within an industry or even for many varying industries. This latter tendency, exemplified in the "federal" or "general" union, began through amalgamations and grew as the benefits of organisation came to be sought by workers in previously unorganised occupations. Impetus was also given to it by the fact that certain unions have been unwilling to recruit workers even of the same or kindred crafts in newer factories remote from the traditional centres of the industry. These workers could either remain unorganised or become members of a general union.

Within the movement (and perhaps more often outside it) are to be found advocates of a single centralised structure similar to that which exists or has existed in some continental countries. But the whole course of union history suggests unmistakably that any attempt to impose centralisation would provoke sharp opposition from the smaller unions, which remain intensely jealous of their independence.

Independence of others and the sanctity of traditional forms and methods are something with which British trade unionism has grown up; they will not be surrendered merely to secure formal uniformity of organisation. Yet the present diversity of structure has its disadvantages. Though in certain industries—mining, for example, or the engineering and building trades—recent developments have made it possible for labour to speak with a single voice in many matters of policy, there are others (such as the textile industry generally) where the enormous multiplication of unions is a serious source of weakness to the movement. Sectionalism and divided counsels are ever-present dangers in such cases. It is no doubt partly due to the weakness of the unions catering for the textile worker that conditions in that industry (incidentally the oldest of all the major manufacturing industries of Britain, at least in their present form) are still so far short of what is desirable that they act as a pronounced deterrent to entry. The reports of the working parties in both cotton and wool included among their recommendations a thorough overhaul of union organisation and the integration of the smaller unions into larger and more widely representative bodies.

There are several ways in which closer integration throughout the movement can be achieved. There is, first, the combination of smaller unions into larger organisations

not confined to single industries—the T. & G.W.U. and the N.U.G.M.W. are the two chief examples. Secondly, a variety of unions covering different parts of a single industry can unite into a single national union, as has recently happened in the case of the N.U.M. Thirdly, unions covering related industries or sections of industries, and some of which may already be national in scale, can combine into federations while preserving a degree of autonomy; here the two main recent examples are the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives. Finally, all unions affiliated to the T.U.C. could endow the General Council with greater powers or even executive authority, thereby giving to the trade union movement a unity at the top which it does not at present possess.

It is improbable that any further general unions will be created, though the recently amalgamated U.S.D.A.W. has some of the characteristics of a general union and includes workers in certain types of employment which do not appear in its title. The two which exist already cover, or could cover, most categories of “general workers”, and other unions are opposed to the setting up of further large structures with ill-defined boundaries. The second method, of combining into national industrial unions, is applicable only to certain types of fairly self-contained industries; the movement towards such unification is likely to continue, and there are cases such as the textile industry where a single national union is a goal to be aimed at. Much the same could be said about the movement towards the federation of unions catering for the more diversified industries. The process is likely to continue and will have a decided strengthening effect, though care must be taken both to ensure reality of co-ordination at the top and to provide for the closest possible contact at all levels down to the branch.

Co-ordination and the T.U.C.

The most important of the suggested possibilities is that of extending the powers and authority of the T.U.C. We have seen earlier how the General Council was late in coming into being and has been from its inception so restricted in function that, great though its moral authority may be, its executive powers are practically non-existent. Its influence over affiliated unions derives not from anything in its constitution, but from the fact that the quality of its membership has been consistently high and its decisions have been based on the very wide practical experience of its members. In addition, its prestige owes a great deal to the personality and ability of Lord Citrine. During his time as General Secretary the position of the General Council was greatly strengthened, and it would seem that even this increase in moral influence was enough to arouse in the minds of some leading figures in the movement the fear that a centralising process was under way. The General Council consists, after all, of representatives of affiliated unions, and though as members of the General Council they may at times wish for greater authority, as members of their own unions they are unwilling to take decisions limiting their independence.

Yet there are some individuals—including men who may even be permanent officials of affiliated unions—who feel that its effectiveness as a co-ordinating body would be increased if its present limited powers were widened to include at least a measure of executive responsibility. The more closely the General Council comes into contact with the Government, as the one body representative of labour as a whole with which the Government can deal, the stronger will be the pressure for endowing it with greater powers. It might be argued that the General Council could be authorised, especially

in cases where quick decisions are required, to enter into commitments binding on the affiliated unions; the unions would still have as safeguards the supremacy of the annual Congress and the responsibility of their own delegates. Yet there is no doubt that at the present time the advocates of centralisation and executive authority for the General Council are a minority in the movement. It would be fatal for the General Council to attempt to increase its powers before the ground is prepared, since such action might easily drive some of the unions to withdraw their affiliation and thus split the movement.

Local and regional co-ordination

The forms of co-ordination so far suggested are effective only or primarily at the top. Below the level of the T.U.C. and the national executives there is no less need for close relations on the host of matters of common interest which may arise, and the existing machinery is not wholly satisfactory. A description has been given earlier of the machinery and functions of the local trades councils, of which there are over 500. Those which are recognised by the T.U.C. act as local agents of Congress, and, as in the case of the T.U.C., their effectiveness depends not on any formal powers with which they are endowed, but upon their own abilities and the relationships they are able to build up with their affiliated branches and with local authorities and Government departments. Probably not more than half of the branches of unions affiliated to the T.U.C. affiliate to trades councils and, as would be expected, those councils which have the largest proportion of branches affiliated are those which provide the best services for trade unionists in their locality.

There are, however, certain obstacles to the fullest use of the trades councils. Those which are not combined with central or divisional Labour Parties are, of course, purely trade union bodies, and no political test can be applied to delegates appointed by the branches. Where, as frequently happens, a proportion of delegates belongs to the Communist Party or other political organisations there is often friction and a tendency for time to be taken up on purely political matters. On the other hand, where trades councils are also central Labour Parties difficulties arise over the demarcation of their industrial and political functions, and their time tends to be taken up on Labour Party business. On balance, it is probable that the most effective trades councils are those which are fully separate from the Labour Party, and it might be advisable to consider whether this separation should become a general rule.

The federations of trades councils act as co-ordinating bodies over wider areas, and in doing so perform a valuable function. There are also regional Advisory Committees of the T.U.C. composed of full-time trade union officials and elected annually by a meeting of all full-time officials in each region. In addition, some unions (N.F.B.T.O., Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions) maintain district or regional committees. There would appear to be room for a fuller development of regional bodies. Under the present system union branches in areas not covered by trades councils—and their number increased during the war in consequence of the siting of wartime factories in country districts—tend to be somewhat isolated. Regional bodies cannot, of course, be given executive authority, but they can be most useful as liaison and advisory groups, and can often represent the trade union movement in their areas *vis-à-vis* local authorities and other bodies. It is doubtful whether the fullest use is at present being made of them in this respect. As far as individual unions are concerned, it might be advisable for unions other than those quoted to consider the advantages of setting up district or regional committees.

Co-ordination between levels

So much for co-ordinating machinery between unions and branches. Inside the individual unions the problem of relations between the centre and the branch varies, as the administrative structure of each union varies. In contrast to the trades councils, which can approach the T.U.C. direct, the union branch is in most cases required to deal with the national executive of the union through one, two or even three intermediate stages. Activity is thus decentralised and work diverted from the central office staff, which is usually small. Decentralisation has much to be said for it as offering opportunities for district or local autonomy and quicker service to branches. But the greatest of all dangers facing the organisation of the trade union movement today is the development between the centre and the men on the job of a gap in outlook and activity sufficiently wide to hamper the working of the unions. Greater centralisation, however, so far from decreasing this gap, might result in widening it still further, since it would almost certainly involve a larger central staff with the danger of creating a bureaucratic machine out of sympathy with the branches.

The real problem is not so much one of administrative machinery as a psychological one; on paper, at least, it would be difficult to bring much improvement to the structure of at any rate some unions. In essence it is simply this. The national official or member of the national executive is in constant touch with the T.U.C., the Ministry of Labour, and perhaps the Government itself. He becomes impressed with the Government's point of view and feels himself responsible, as it were, for the good behaviour of his union; the militancy and drive which made a name for him in his days as a branch or district committee member gives way as he grows older in his job to an increasing caution.* The branches, on the other hand, being further removed from governmental influence, and having individually less to lose if a mistake is made, retain their militancy and are apt, when unsupported by the higher ranks of the organisation, to accuse them of "selling out".

Returning to the three-level analysis given in the first study in this volume, the problem of maintaining adequate contact between the first level and the other two is serious enough. But no less serious is the question of relations between the second and third levels. Often the district or branch official has been selected for his militancy, his rhetorical ability or merely his seniority, and is not necessarily well equipped for his task. (Why, one might ask, do so few unions make provision for even the most elementary training of their branch officials in such things as procedure at meetings and the writing of correspondence and minutes?)

The quality of branch meetings, of course, varies enormously. Some are extremely dull. The ordinary inactive member is unwilling to give up his spare time to meetings unless they are interesting. He does not really get to know the branch officials, and at times he may be stimulated into making extravagant demands on them and denounce them when they refuse to comply. On the other hand, it also happens very frequently that a branch official, anxious to maintain his popularity by a show of activity, is ahead of his branch members. In either case the solution of the problem is increased attendance at branch meetings, but the experience of most unions has shown how difficult this is to secure.

* An interesting phenomenon is that an official once elected is comparatively seldom defeated at subsequent elections, even in unions where the gap between the centre and the rank and file is commonly supposed to be widest.

This divergence between the leadership and the rank and file is something which has always existed, though more pronounced at some times than at others. Since the war it has been most clearly illustrated in the crop of unofficial strikes. There has only been one officially recognised strike on a large scale (of the N.U.V.B. in April 1948) since well before the war—the longest period since the foundation of the T.U.C.—and most important local strikes have not been supported by the leadership of the unions during the same period. Yet since the end of the war several disputes have occurred in which, had the same grounds for complaint existed in pre-war days, the strikes would certainly have received official backing. To the T.U.C. and most national bodies the strike is, in the present condition of the country, a weapon for the most sparing use; it is also technically illegal. Machinery exists in most important industries for the settlement of disputes, if direct negotiation fails, by recourse to arbitration, and top-level union policy has been to use this machinery and abide by the results. The chief source of complaint against the machinery is its slowness,* and by the time a decision is reached tempers are often badly frayed. In some such cases it is probable that the real cause of annoyance is not the length of time involved, but the fact that the claim has not succeeded. But a factor which increases irritation at delay is that since their wartime expansion many unions include a high proportion of recently recruited members unused to the procedure of presenting claims, unaware of the difficulties to be faced, and irrationally expecting that a claim only has to be put forward to be won in a matter of days or weeks.

The union leadership is, of course, perfectly correct in insisting on the use of the machinery provided. There is, however, a parallel obligation on it to speed up the machinery as far as it can—and one of the complaints against the unions concerned in the instance quoted was that they had themselves contributed to the delay. More important still, however, is the duty of the leadership to evaluate, much more thoroughly than is always the case at present, each claim entered from below—bearing in mind that there is always a certain proportion of irrational claims presented which cannot possibly be supported. It can then decide, and expect to create greater confidence in its decision, whether or not to support the claim. There is in some unions at present a feeling that it is no use passing a complaint upwards as it will be dismissed in any case, and though this feeling is often unjustified it exists as a psychological factor in the relations of union branches with the higher levels. Slowness in presenting a claim, or failure to explain fully the reasons for not doing so, destroys confidence in the leadership. The result is that the membership follows irresponsible leaders from its own ranks, takes the law into its own hands, and unofficial strikes follow.

It has been suggested earlier that the trade unions can play a valuable role in passing downwards to their membership information on the economic and political policy of the Government. There is, of course, a serious danger in this. If the centre becomes too closely identified with Government policy, if it acts merely as an uncritical mouthpiece for Government propaganda, confidence in it will diminish. A case in point was the response of the T.U.C. to the Government's demand for the suspension of further wage increases in February 1948. Acceptance of the Government's point of view was bound to be unpopular with the rank and file of the movement. The original published statement, couched as it was in guarded terms and evading many important issues, was

* For example, in the case of the road transport strike of January, 1947, direct negotiation had taken five months from the formulation of the original demand and proceedings before the conciliation board another three.

inadequate to allay the fears and suspicions of the lower ranks, and the General Council was hotly criticised in consequence. Even cautious members of the rank and file were disappointed, while those who were habitually more militant or more critical attracted to them additional support. Whether their criticisms were soundly based or not is not the point at issue. If the General Council was right, a stronger and more immediate lead to the rank and file would have disarmed the critics. Much of the criticism was in fact based on ignorance, but in the absence of a strong lead it was easy for habitual opponents of General Council policy to create the impression that the leadership was failing in its duty. Even when, over a month later, a conference of executives was summoned to discuss the situation, and though a large majority supported the General Council, criticism within the movement was not entirely overcome.

Trade union research

This is only an example of a widespread tendency. In general the leadership of the movement could do much more than it does to make comprehensible to the membership the reasons for policy—and this is something quite as essential if policy is to be condemned or criticised as if it is to be approved. It is here that the research and educational functions of the movement become important.

By comparison with trade unionism in the U.S.A. and some other countries, the British movement lags far behind in this field. In the U.S.A., for example, some eighty out of about two hundred unions maintain their own research departments. In this country the T.U.C. has a small section charged primarily with research, though it does not form a separate department. A few unions also have research secretaries, though most of their time is taken up in providing material for the briefing of delegates to conferences, Members of Parliament, and similar matters. The T.U.C. issues the monthly journal *Labour*, and a number of unions also provide their members with journals issued at varying periods, but usually monthly. Sometimes the research secretaries are directly responsible for the preparation of these journals; in other cases there is a separate publications officer who may or may not work in association with the research secretary. Some unions, of course, have a publications officer but no research secretary.

Very few of these research secretaries are able to devote much time to research in the wider sense, as opposed to the preparation of briefs and the investigation of matters of immediate concern to the union. There is at present no co-ordination between them, though recently a move has been made towards the setting up of a permanent co-ordinating committee under the auspices of the T.U.C. Until some such step is taken, and until more unions establish research departments of their own, the very wide field of economic and industrial affairs in which research work is needed will not be adequately covered.

More use might also be made of research bodies not directly connected with the trade union movement. There has been a tendency on the part of the T.U.C. and some unions to distrust material provided from outside sources. Equally, there are independent bodies which would welcome co-operation from the T.U.C. or the unions, but this has seldom been forthcoming. The movement should, of course, direct its own research work rather than rely on outside bodies, but at the same time some of these bodies could provide the movement with useful assistance. A possible indication of a change in outlook is the acceptance by the T.U.C. of an invitation to be represented on the Committee on

Industrial Productivity established towards the end of 1947, and it is to be hoped that in future fuller liaison with other outside organisations will be possible.

Education and the membership

At the lower levels of the trade union movement the field is very unevenly covered. The universities, a number of voluntary organisations, and the unions themselves are the bodies chiefly concerned, but their functions are not fully differentiated nor carried out with equal efficiency.

General education, as distinct from that strictly concerned with trade unionism, is the province of the universities and the voluntary bodies, and as things stand at present the facilities available are in most cases in excess of the demand for them. The whole country is divided into areas each covered by an extra-mural board of a university or university college, and on which as a rule outside interests are represented. These boards, which are partially financed by Government grant, provide classes in a wide variety of subjects, and it is sometimes possible for students to win scholarships to universities direct from extra-mural classes. Some county and county borough councils also provide classes of a similar type and standard.

Of the voluntary educational bodies the most important are the Workers' Educational Association (with its offshoot, the Workers' Education Trade Union Committee) and the National Council of Labour Colleges; some work is also done by other bodies such as the Y.M.C.A. and a number of specially endowed local organisations. The W.E.A. and N.C.L.C. are directly supported by the T.U.C. and individual unions. The W.E.A. is officially recognised by the Ministry of Education and receives a Government grant, while the N.C.L.C. does not; this fact accounts largely for the old-standing and bitter dispute between the two bodies which hampers their full effectiveness. There is no interchange of lecturers, no local co-ordination of classes or programmes, and the N.C.L.C. refuses to be represented on local W.E.A. committees. Neither body is controlled by the T.U.C. or the unions, but it would greatly improve the efficiency of the educational services if the T.U.C. were to use its moral and financial influence to promote the healing of the breach.

Within the same field of general education, more advanced study is made possible by the provision of studentships and short courses at Ruskin College, Oxford, the London School of Economics, and elsewhere. The financial backing for these is mainly provided by the T.U.C. Educational Trust, for which the whole of the T.U.C.'s share of the profits of the *Daily Herald* is set aside. It is perhaps chiefly in this direction that there is room for extension; a larger number of studentships could be filled, but of course expense is a limiting factor.

At the lower levels—local classes and correspondence courses run by the voluntary bodies—the facilities available are not fully taken up. The initiative in joining a class rests with the student, but it would appear that union branches do not do as much as they might to stimulate demand. The vast majority of union members is not touched by the facilities which are available. Some unions have tried the experiment of basing W.E.A. or N.C.L.C. classes on the branch, and the results have often been encouraging. A good many branches also invite occasional speakers to their meetings, often, but by no means always, on political subjects. Where this is done it is usually found that atten-

dance at branch meetings improves, and experience of this type of branch activity suggests that it could be much more widely extended given positive encouragement from above.

On specific questions concerning the trade union movement itself, the facilities at present available would appear to be adequate; the voluntary bodies and Ruskin College provide both lecturers and correspondence courses on many aspects of trade union affairs and history. Again there is a need for increased demand. In the earlier days of many unions, education in the history and principles of trade unionism and in other subjects directly concerning the movement was regarded as one of the prime duties of the branch. To-day there is no less need. If the branches cannot supply it themselves—and as a rule they cannot—it would be to their advantage to stimulate their members to make use of the facilities provided by other bodies and to co-operate with those bodies more fully than is often the case at present.

There is in this field a lack of co-ordination, however. The best co-ordinating authority would probably be the T.U.C. itself. The work of the voluntary bodies is valuable, and it is not suggested that they should be superseded; on the contrary, the assumption of responsibility by the T.U.C. simply as a co-ordinating centre would encourage full recognition of their value as supply agencies, and would in all probability be welcomed by them.

Finally there is the field of education and supplying information in matters affecting individual unions. This is clearly the responsibility of the unions themselves in the first place, though again a co-ordinating body at the top would be desirable. Within this field fall such questions as the supply of factual material through union journals, leaflets and special publications, the education of the membership in the history and work of the union, and the provision of facilities for branch officials and others to be trained in the carrying out of their duties. To fulfil these tasks it would be necessary to have at the headquarters of each union an education officer with a staff capable of selecting and presenting material, and working in close contact with the editor of the union journal. It may be that some of the smaller unions could not afford the necessary expenditure. But the movement towards federation of unions with similar interests offers scope for the organisation of this work on a group basis in cases where the individual unions cannot undertake it.

In all these fields there is room for improvement, both in the planning and co-ordination of programmes and syllabuses and in the quality of the facilities offered. If these improvements could be carried out, and if the demand for education in all its forms could be stimulated, there can be little doubt that the result would be to raise the quality and enthusiasm of the membership and to strengthen the movement as a whole.

Political relations within the movement

A final aspect of internal policy which must be referred to is the difficult question of internal political relations, since it is on the approach to this that the future unity of the movement depends.

It is inevitable that the strongest political links of the T.U.C. and the unions should be with the Labour Party, for whose foundation they were mainly responsible and to which nearly half of them are affiliated. But the trade union movement is not the whole of the Labour Party nor the Labour Party the whole of the trade union movement. It is

unlikely, owing to differences in composition and approach, that the policy of the two will be identical. There is an important minority in the trade unions which does not accept some parts of the Labour Party's programme, the largest and best organised section being that associated with the Communist Party. At times in the past the leadership, most of whose members belong to the Labour Party, has attempted to suppress the minority by the use of the "black circular" (a letter urging trades councils to refuse to permit the election of Communists) and other methods. More recently, since the autumn of 1947, the opposition of the two sections has become more pronounced, and has reached a peak over the question of implementing the Government's request for controlling wages.

It is logical for the Labour Party to exclude or expel from its ranks persons of other political sympathies. But there is definite danger in extending the same principle to the trade union movement, and in attempting to bring it under exclusive Labour Party control. The greatest strength of the movement is its unity, and the fear is justified that the attempted suppression of the Communists or other political dissidents inside its membership would ultimately result in a split such as has occurred in other countries.

Unity of organisation is still valuable even though it may cover wide political disagreement within the movement. The reasons for the existence of so influential an opposition group bring us back into many of the questions covered in the foregoing pages. Over-caution at the centre leads to over-enthusiasm at the edges, coupled frequently with a sense of frustration and a demand for a more positive policy. In the three levels of membership within the movement it is noticeable that political opposition is strongest at the second—among, that is, members who are active both as trade unionists and politically—and it is also noticeable that it is mainly from this level that the higher ranks are recruited. Here, as also in the case of shop stewards and others who become in any sense leaders of their comrades, the explanation is a simple one—a man who is prepared to devote his time and energy to trade union affairs or to expose himself to criticism or possible victimisation is likely to be by nature politically more active than the rest.

The solution of the problems created by the existence of this opposition rests largely with the higher levels of the movement themselves. The movement must not, or rather its leadership must not, become an official agency or a mere mouthpiece. One of its main duties, however, is the creation of confidence in policies which it does in fact accept, and this we have seen depends on its use of the various parts of its structure for explanation and education. If it surrenders its independence, or if it fails to make its own policy clear, opposition will grow. The value of opposition is that it keeps the leadership alive and active and compels it to take positive steps to create confidence in itself and its policy; if the opposition were silenced or forced to break away altogether, the danger would be that the leadership might sink into a lethargic state in which it would neither lead nor represent the interests of the rank and file.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this final study the constantly recurring theme has been the question of confidence. Many of the obstacles to full trade union participation in the drive for increased production have been seen to be a legacy from the suspicions and hostilities of the past. Their removal will be possible only if these suspicions and hostilities can be replaced by a more confident outlook. The final questions to be asked are therefore, firstly, confidence in what? And secondly, how can confidence be encouraged?

Neither side of industry can be blamed exclusively for the lack of confidence in pre-war years; if it is to be secured now, concessions must be made by both. It has been seen that the trade union movement has already made important concessions. In a position of unprecedented strength, it has deliberately refrained from pressing home its full advantage, and its leadership has shown an admirable sense of responsibility. Earlier there have been suggested some further modifications of outlook and practice which might help to increase the considerable contribution already made. But it would be too much to expect this policy of restraint to be continued or extended unless the movement at each of its three levels can be convinced that its self-denial is not in vain and does not merely confer on other sections of the community advantages which destroy the principle of equality of sacrifice.

Let us again state, this time in concrete and personal terms, the aims of trade unionism—remembering that to a trade unionist at any level these aims *are* concrete and personal. To him, the maintenance and improvement of wages, hours, and conditions of labour mean the hope of a living standard which he can regard as high enough to provide what he wants for himself and his family, hours which will leave him leisure, conditions which will protect him when at work against undue discomfort, fatigue, and danger to life or health. He knows that he cannot define these hopes in exact terms and that each advance will be followed by new desires, but he is content as a rule to set before himself a limited immediate goal, leaving the rest to a more distant future. Full employment means, to him, that there should always be available for him a job of the type he knows and likes at a wage which he regards as fair; in practical terms, it means security and freedom from the old haunting fear of long weeks, months, or years in the dole-queue. The third aim, of extending “the influence of workpeople over the policies and purposes of industry”, though again difficult to define exactly, implies for him a clear enough ideal; it means the breaking down of the barrier which separates him from the boss, a new status for himself and the feeling that he has himself some say in the organisation and directing of the work in which he spends so high a proportion of his waking hours.

Hopes of this sort make their strongest appeal to the older trade unionist who remembers the bad days of depression. Being a realist, he does not imagine for one moment that his hopes can be immediately fulfilled; he understands that progress must be gradual, and that there are still many difficulties to be overcome. But being also a realist in a different sense, and concerned first and foremost with his own personal position, he is intensely distrustful of the argument that the realisation of his hopes

depends largely on his own efforts. He is still afraid that increased effort on his part will benefit not him but the boss, and he still clings to traditional practices, devised originally for his protection and to maintain solidarity with his fellow-workers, which in present circumstances may work against his long-term interests. He is not prepared to work harder or to relax these protective measures until he is convinced that by doing so he will not weaken his own position.

In fact, he needs confidence in the future. Confidence means to him not an airy and utopian belief in the immediate achievement of all he wants, but confidence that the realisation of his hopes is being brought nearer. He wants to feel that he is not being exploited, that his wages and conditions of work are as good as circumstances will allow and are not being depressed to the advantage of someone else. He wants to feel that his job is secure and does not depend on the whim of an irresponsible boss. He wants to feel that his status as a worker is really improving, and he bitterly resents the suggestion that he is incapable of having useful ideas. He has the greatest contempt for a manager who does not understand his job; he hates the appointment of relatives or favourites of directors to managerial posts. He is not content to be treated as a minor part of a machine; he is an individual, with his own particular skill and abilities and with opinions of his own, and he will insist on being treated as such.

Does he feel all these things now? Does he feel them even as much as is possible in present circumstances? The answer is obviously that he does not. The second question therefore is how to encourage him to do so—if indeed the prospects are bright enough to justify encouragement.

Earlier in this study the suggestion has been made that both the Government and the higher levels of the trade union movement could do much in this direction—the former by more careful and more extensive explanations to the public of the reasons for policy decisions, the latter by improved educational services within the movement and by the supply to union branches and members of material interpreting current economic conditions and relating them to trade union activity. For all the vast amount of published material on Government policy, on the need for higher production and on the external factors affecting the future of the country, there is still an immense amount of ignorance. Ignorance creates distrust and can be exploited by trouble-makers from all sides. Lack of proper information is at present largely responsible for the occasional success among workers of the emotional and ill-considered (and sometimes ill-willed) appeals which lead to unofficial strikes and other forms of local trouble. A continuous supply of well-presented information, and continuous encouragement to use it, can probably do more than anything else to improve discipline and stimulate enthusiasm for the job—provided, of course, that the policy to be explained is in itself acceptable.

Secondly, the unions can be strengthened and their co-operation ensured by continuing and where possible extending the present system of consultation between the Government and its departments on the one side and the T.U.C. and the national executives and officials on the other. There is always a danger where this is done that critics of the leadership within the movement will accuse them of “selling out”; but on the whole the movement is more likely to accept these contacts as proof of public recognition of its new position in society. The practice is now well established, and it is to be hoped that it will be maintained; if it is not, there is grave danger that the movement will once more be driven into its old state of permanent opposition.

Thirdly, confidence can be encouraged by the spread of effective joint consultation within industry. There are still considerable resistances within the movement to the principle of consultation, based on the traditional distrust of employers as a class. The employers too have their resistances, and there have been many occasions on which they have turned down approaches by the unions. These resistances must be overcome, and the employers must, if the system is to work, be prepared to meet the unions at least half-way. There is no quick or direct way to effective consultation. It is something that must grow slowly, though its growth can be speeded by encouragement from both sides. Of its value there can be no doubt, and if it can be made into a general practice it will enormously assist the development of confidence on the part of the worker—not only confidence in the policies and purposes of industry, but also something that is more important still, namely confidence in himself.

It must never be forgotten that lack of confidence is something deeply rooted in the past; suspicion is a habit of mind. The process of abolishing suspicion will be slow and surrounded with difficulties, both material and psychological. Yet somehow it must be abolished and replaced with confidence in the reality of the advance towards a better state of things. The Government, the employers, the Press, the public itself will have a part to play. So too has the trade union movement. Its participation as of right in the affairs of the country is now firmly established, and it has shown by its behaviour that the trust placed in it has been justified. If it continues to meet its new responsibilities in the same spirit, and to adapt itself to its new role, it will make an even greater contribution to the prosperity of Britain, and will be able to look forward in all confidence to still greater strength and usefulness.

APPENDIX I

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP IN DIFFERENT-SIZED BRANCHES AND AVERAGE SIZE OF BRANCH FOR A NUMBER OF TRADE UNIONS,
ARRANGED IN ORDER OF AVERAGE SIZE OF BRANCH

Union	Year for Which Data are Taken	Total Membership	No. of Branches	Average Size of Branch	Percentage of Membership in branches of			
					1 to 100	100 to 200	200 to 500	500 to 1,000 and Over
N.U.B.S.O.	1924	69,601	66	1,058	1	2	7	5
N.U.B.S.O.	1938	80,296	72	1,115	1	2	5	4
N.U.D.B.T.W.	1936	78,471	120	654	0	3	15	30
M.F.G.B. (except S. Wales, Scotland, Forest of Dean)	1930	375,140	789	475	—	—	—	—
N.S.P.W.	1939	12,000	26	462	—	—	—	—
A.E.U.	1941	454,126	1,379	329	2	7	62	29
N.U.P.B.P.W.	1937	59,773	185	324	—	—	—	—
N.U.T.G.W..	1930	65,409	235	278	—	—	—	—
NATSOPA	1938	27,656	120	230	—	—	—	—
N.U.R.	1940	364,321	1,611	226	10	17	36	24
N.U.V.B.	1939	26,926	127	212	9	21	35	25
N.U.F.W.	1939	30,975	164	189	11	24	46	15
E.T.U.	1939	70,065	370	188	12	19	48	19
N.U.D.A.W..	1937	158,103	862	183	9	13	21	19
T.A.	1939	38,090	219	171	15	20	21	16
I.S.T.C.	1938	88,048	524	168	10	24	53	10
T. & G.W.U. (Power Section)	1939	30,746	194	158	15	16	35	3
U.B.I.S.S.S.	1939	55,265	366	152	12	27	61	0
R.C.A.	1939	64,389	438	147	—	—	—	—
N.A.F.T.A.	1939	22,868	180	127	19	28	36	7
A.S.L.P.	1939	7,787	62	126	18	11	31	15
A.S.L.E.F.	1939	53,325	449	119	—	—	—	—
N.A.U.S.A.W.C.	1935	49,992	428	117	—	—	—	—
A.S.W.	1937	129,383	1,193	108	24	41	35	0
U.P.A..	1939	12,671	116	104	33	45	22	0
P.G.D.E.U.	1939	33,364	350	95	—	—	—	—
A.U.B.T.W..	1939	67,120	719	93	—	—	—	—
S.S.A.	1935	16,909	184	92	19	34	42	5
A.E.S.D.	1939	11,000	116	90	—	—	—	—
N.S.P..	1941	42,655	505	85	—	—	—	—
N.A.O.P.	1937	13,836	202	69	34	21	41	4
A.B.F.S.W.	1939	8,987	136	66	—	—	—	—
A.S.S.E.T.	1939	1,726	41	42	—	—	—	—

TABLE II

SOME FIGURES ILLUSTRATING THE PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERSHIP VOTING IN A NUMBER OF TRADE UNIONS, ARRANGED IN DESCENDING ORDER OF POLL; ALSO, FOR SOME OF THE UNIONS, THE PERCENTAGE OF BRANCHES NOT RECORDING A VOTE

Union	Year or Years	No. of Votes on which Average is Based	Average Percentage of Membership Voting	Average Percentage of Branches Recording No Vote
N.U.P.B.P.W.	1937	2	76	No Figure
A.S.L.P.	1939	2	71	"
L.S.C.	1930, 1935, 1939	23	70	"
T.A.	1939	2	57	12
NATSOPA	1939	2	43	No Figure
N.S.P.	1938-43	7	26	"
N.U.V.B.	1921-42	20	25	27
N.U.R.	1931-32	2	23	36
U.P.A.	1927-44	60	22	13
E.T.U.	1940-44	7	21	No Figure
A.E.U.	1920-43	32	20	"
A.S.W.	1920-43	89	18	"
N.U.B.S.O.	1922-43	18	16	30 (for 13 votes)
S.S.A.	1921-39	22	14	43
N.A.F.T.A.	1924-39	19	13	42
U.B.I.S.S.S.	1920-43	36	6	43 (for 2 votes)

NOTE.—77 per cent of the membership of the Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain (with the exception of Scotland, South Wales, and the Forest of Dean Unions) took part in the one vote of which record could be found. No average could be derived from one vote, but there is reason to believe that the voting percentage is usually high in the miners' organisation.

Only one figure could be found for the A.B.F.S.W. This related to a vote in 1936, in which 31 per cent of the membership took part.

TABLE III

VARIATION IN PERCENTAGE POLL OF THE MEMBERSHIP IN BRANCHES OF DIFFERENT SIZE, INCLUDING NON-VOTING BRANCHES. BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF VOTING IN SEVEN TRADE UNIONS FOR WHICH THE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

Union	No. of Votes on which Figures are Based	Percentage of Membership Voting in Branches				
		1 to 100	100 to 200	200 to 300	500 to 1,000	1,000 and over
T.A.	2	52	55	58	54	55
N.U.V.B.	1	22	27	29	20	8
U.P.A.	1	20	15	12	—	—
N.U.B.S.O.	14	17	25	23	22	14
S.S.A.	3	24	16	14	—	—
N.A.F.T.A.	2	13	12	9	7	8
U.B.I.S.S.S.	2	9	7	7	—	—

TABLE IV

VARIATION IN PERCENTAGE POLL OF THE MEMBERSHIP IN BRANCHES OF DIFFERENT SIZE,
EXCLUDING NON-VOTING BRANCHES. BASED ON THE SAME VOTING AS TABLE III

Union	Percentage of Membership Voting in Branches				
	1 to 100	100 to 200	200 to 300	500 to 1,000	1,000 and over
T.A.	58	57	58	57	56
N.U.V.B.	46	33	34	22	8
U.P.A.	28	18	15	—	—
N.U.B.S.O.	36	37	30	24	14
S.S.A.	34	21	18	—	—
N.A.F.T.A.	30	19	13	8	13
U.B.I.S.S.S.	25	11	8	—	—

TABLE V

VARIATION IN PROPORTION OF BRANCHES OF DIFFERENT SIZE NOT RECORDING ANY VOTE.
BASED ON THE SAME VOTING AS TABLE III

Union	Percentage of Branches not recording any votes for Branches of		
	1 to 100	100 to 200	200 and over
T.A.	18	4	1
N.U.V.B.	57	36	12
U.P.A.	36	15	20
N.U.B.S.O.	67	35	12
S.S.A.	53	27	26
N.A.F.T.A.	66	39	23
U.B.I.S.S.S.	67	40	18

APPENDIX II

LIST OF BODIES AND ORGANISATIONS ON WHICH THE T.U.C. IS REPRESENTED

A. International Bodies

World Federation of Trade Unions
American Federation of Labour, Joint Committee of the T.U.C. and
Anglo-French Trade Union Council
Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee
Congress of Industrial Organisations, Joint Committee of the T.U.C. and
International Labour Organisation
International Trade Organisation, Advisory Committee
National Co-operating Body for Education (U.N.E.S.C.O.)

B. Official Committees and Joint Bodies

(a) *Economic*

Building Materials Prices, Standing Committee on
Central Price Regulation Committee
Coal Consumers' Council, Domestic
Coal Consumers' Council, Industrial
Development Areas, Treasury Advisory Committee on
Economic Planning Board
Excess Profits Tax, Advisory Panel
Export Guarantees Advisory Council
Fuel Development Board
Independent Film Production, Committee on
Iron and Steel Board
National Production Advisory Council on Industry
Resale Price Maintenance Committee
Rubber Consultative Committee
Timber Utilisation, Consultative Committee on
Tin Consultative Committee, Board of Trade

(b) *Wages*

Catering Wages Commission
London Passenger Wages Board
Wages Councils Advisory Council

(c) *Employment, etc.*

Ministry of Labour, National Joint Advisory Council
Ministry of Labour, Joint Consultative Committee
Ministry of Labour, Appointments Advisory Committee
Ministry of Labour, Advisory Committee on Cost of Living Index
Ministry of Labour, Advisory Committee on Industrial Health
Ministry of Labour, Committee on the Staggering of Holidays
Ministry of Labour, Women's Consultative Committee
Disabled Persons (Employment) Act, National Advisory Council
Disabled Persons Employment Corporation

Domestic Workers, National Advisory Committee on
 Factory and Welfare Advisory Board
 Industrial Diseases, Committee on
 Manpower Economy Committee (Admiralty, Army, and R.A.F.)
 National Juvenile Employment Council
 Nurses and Midwives, National Advisory Council on the Recruitment and Distribution of
 Nursing Profession, National Advisory Council for the
 Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee

• (d) *Miscellaneous Official and Semi-Official Bodies*

Alternative Remedies, Committees on
 Army Cadet Force, Executive Committee
 British Council, Executive Committee
 British Institute of Management, Council of the
 British Standards Institution, General Council
 British Standards Institution, Technical Committee on Quality Control
 Civil Aviation, National Consultative Council for
 Colonial Labour Advisory Committee
 Exhibitions Policy Committee
 Lighting in Factories and Workshops, Committee on
 National College of Horology, Governing Body
 National Institute of Houseworkers
 National Insurance Advisory Committee
 National Savings Committee
 Pensions Appeal Tribunals, Selection Committee
 Road Safety Committee
 Tourist, Catering and Holiday Board
 War Damage Commission
 War Works Commission

C. Educational Bodies

Cambridge Extra-Mural Board
 Central Advisory Council for Adult Education in H.M. Forces (Home Services)
 Education for Commerce, Committee on
 Educational Advance, Council for
 London School of Economics and Political Science, Joint Committee of the T.U.C. and the
 National Council of Labour Colleges
 National Foundation for Adult Education
 Oxford Extra-Mural Delegacy
 Oxford University, Ophthalmological Research Endowment Committee
 Ruskin College, Executive Committee
 Workers' Educational Association
 Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee

D. Political and Trade Union Bodies

Daily Herald, Board of Directors
 Labour Party, Policy Sub-Committee
 Local Government Service, National Advisory Committee for
 National Council of Labour
 National Women's Advisory Committee
 Non-Manual Workers' Advisory Council
 Trades Councils Joint Consultative Committee
 Trade Union Journal Editors' Advisory Committee
 Working Women's Organisations, Standing Joint Committee of

E. Miscellaneous Voluntary Bodies

Aliens Council
Boy Scouts Association, Council of the
Boys' Clubs, National Association of
British Film Institute
British Legion, Joint Committee of the T.U.C. and the
British Medical Association, Joint Committee of the T.U.C. and the
Central Design Council
Cinematograph Films Council
Citizens' Clubs, National Advisory Council of the National Association of
King George National Memorial Fund
Lancashire Industrial Development Committee
Mary Macarthur Holiday Home Management Committee
National Film Association
Physical Recreation, Industry Sub-Committee of the General Council for
Playing Fields Association
Royal Institute of International Affairs
Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, National Industrial Safety Committee
Travel Association, General Council
United Aid for China Fund
United Nations Association, General Council of the
Victory (Ex-Service) Association
War Memorials Advisory Council (Royal Society of Arts)
Workers' Sports Association